THE FOUR GOSPELS

EXPLAINED BY THEIR WRITERS

WITH AN APPENDIX

ON

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

EDITED BY

J. B. ROUSTAING

TRANSLATED BY

W. F. KIRBY

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I

LONDON

TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL

1881

[*All rights reserved*]

101. f. 789.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE

TO

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION.

THE work now offered to the English public is highly esteemed on the Continent, as a further development of the religious philosophy of which the first principles are laid down in the works of ALLAN KARDEC. The circumstances under which it was written are fully detailed in the "Editor's Preface;" and there is nothing to add on this subject, except to suggest that it should be read impartially and judged on its merits, without any bias for or against it on account of the origin which is claimed for it.

Of the purity and sublimity of the moral teachings of the present work there can be but one opinion; while many of the views which it contains will be found to be not only interesting and suggestive in the highest degree, but, in some directions—and notably as regards the hypothesis of Evolution, of which they present a *rationale* that effectually rescues it from the grasp of Materialism—to have anticipated the latest results of scientific research. It will also be seen that they explain the *modus operandi* of the most recent phenomena of ostensible spirit-action, now commonly known, for want of a better term, as "materialization;" that is to say, the production of seemingly human forms, possessed of temporary visibility, tangibility, and the power of simulating various human attributes and functions: phenomena to which they give additional importance and dignity by showing that their production is providentially designed as preparing the necessary basis for the acceptance of the leading doctrine of what claims to be a "Revelation

Digitized by Google

of Revelation," precursor of an approaching transformation of human society as a consequence of the transformation of human belief.

It is much to be regretted that the Editor, overlooking the inevitable imperfections attendant on intermundane communication at its present stage of development, should have copied (as he has evidently done) the entries of the séance-book *verbatim*, without venturing to suppress even the word-for-word repetitions which constantly occur in the original, owing either to old ground being gone over again, or to emphasis having degenerated into prolixity. In order to render the book readable in English, it has been necessary to avoid reprinting useless repetitions; but great care has been taken not to omit anything which forms an essential part of the work. The Editor's Preface and Introduction have been thoroughly revised by Miss ANNA BLACKWELL, who, though unable to carry out her long-cherished intention of translating this book (to which her translations of the works of ALLAN KARDEC have been made as paving the way), has aided the Translator in performing the task which has thus come to be confided to him with her advice and co-operation.

As the English translation of the New Testament is glaringly faulty in many points bearing on the teachings of this work, and as the French translation of the same, being made from the Vulgate, though less incorrect in some respects, is more so in others, the Translator has found it necessary to render the text of the Gospels throughout from the Greek. In doing this he has especially endeavoured to distinguish between the three meanings of the word "Heaven," which are wholly confused in the English version. In the Synoptic Gospels, when the word is used in the plural, it denotes the Spirit-Worlds; and when used in the singular, it frequently means the sky. But in the Gospel of John, it is generally employed in the singular, to denote the region whence Christ descended, and to which He would return—*i.e.*, the abode of the fully purified spirits, or Nirvana.

No attempt has been made to revise the text of the Gospels, or to suppress doubtful or even notoriously

Digitized by Google

spurious passages. The teachings of the present work, respecting the temporary usefulness of the errors resulting from the action of the human element in the production of the Gospels, render such elimination superfluous. It may be added that Ainslie's translation of Tischendorf's New Testament has been occasionally consulted.

The Translator has appended a few illustrative notes, all of which are marked "TRANSL.," in order to distinguish them from those of the original work.

W. F. KIRBY.
ANNA BLACKWELL.

LONDON AND PARIS, 1881.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE explanation of the Gospels which I now offer to the consideration of my fellow-men is not mine; it is the work of those who prepared, took part in, or recorded, the mission of Jesus upon the earth.

Having borne witness to the events of that mission *as they then understood it*, under the veil of the letter, they now, at the period predicted for the commencement of a new era, bear witness anew to the reality of that mission by this new Revelation, which yet is not *new*, being only an explanation of that former one, destined to prove its truthfulness, by showing the real nature of events which men have regarded as "miracles" or as "fables," because they have hitherto been ignorant both of the natural laws through whose action those events were made to occur, and of the necessity of progressive revelations, proportioned to the progressive receptivity of succeeding ages. All those who took part in the mission of Jesus will return to the earth to aid in the fulfilment of his promises, as the organs of the Spirit of Truth whose advent he predicted; and when the work of the Spirit of Truth shall have been accomplished in the purification and transformation of the people of our planet, Jesus himself will return to it, in all the glory of his real nature, as the visible Sovereign of creatures who, through their purification and transformation, will have become capable of receiving the unveiled truth which he will bring to them.

The present age being one of incredulity and negation, it is right and fitting that I should briefly state the circumstances which have led to the production of this work.

Digitized by Google

Let me say, then, that I was thrown on my own resources from my youth, and that I had to achieve my literary, scientific, and legal education, and my position as a barrister in large and lucrative practice, through a long and arduous struggle with poverty and difficulties of all kinds. Having in 1826 successfully passed my examinations at the University School of Toulouse, I obtained a clerkship in Paris that enabled me to complete my general and special studies in the great schools of the metropolis. On being admitted to the bar, I returned to my native town, Bordeaux, and devoted myself with untiring assiduity, during a period of thirty years, to the profession to which I owe a free and independent position and the means of aiding those who, less fortunate than myself, are in need of friendly counsel and a helping hand.

This busy career of public and private activity was interrupted in 1858 by a serious illness that compelled me, during a couple of years, to lay aside all business and to occupy myself solely with the care of my health, on the recovery of which, in 1861, I was about to return to the exercise of my profession, when I happened to meet an eminent physician of our town, who spoke to me of the possibility of communication between the people of the earth and the people of the spirit-world as a truth resulting from the theoretic inductions of a doctrine which was obtaining wide acceptance under the name of "Spiritism," and which was abundantly confirmed by the facts of this communication occurring in harmony with that doctrinal theory among the converts to the latter; concluding his statements by expressing his conviction of the vast importance of this communication between the earth and the spirit-world, as being destined to usher in a new revelation of religious truth for the whole human race.

All this was absolutely new to me, and my first impression in regard to it was one of incredulity. But my long experience of life had taught me that an *impression* is not a sufficient ground for a *decision*, and that no one should affirm or deny any proposition until he has fully

Digitized by Google

acquainted himself with the subject to which it refers. I therefore suspended my judgment in relation to the matter thus mentioned to me for the first time, and determined to investigate it for myself before coming to any conclusion in regard to it.

My respect for the principle of liberty of conscience had made me tolerant of all creeds; but, at the time referred to, I had no settled religious belief. My reason refused to admit the statements of the Gospels concerning the personality and mission of Jesus. I reverenced his pure morality; but the real nature and aim of his appearance upon the earth being concealed from my view by the veil of the letter, I took no interest in the narrative of events which, for want of their true explanation, could only be classed as "miraculous" in the sense of *a departure from the known laws of Nature*, and which were consequently beyond the pale of my convictions.

Deeply interested in the pursuit of truth—physical, moral, and intellectual—I had been accustomed to conduct all my inquiries through the double process of study and experimentation; and I resolved to prosecute my inquiry, as to the reality of the asserted possibility of communication with those who are commonly called "the dead," with the aid of the same methods of investigation which I was in the habit of employing for the elucidation of all other subjects.

I therefore commenced this new inquiry by a careful perusal of the works of ALLAN KARDEC, the pioneer of the Spiritist movement. In "The Spirits' Book" of this author I found a perfect code of morality, an explanation of life in general and of human life in particular, in harmony with reason and progress, and a fore-glimpse of the progressive modifications of our relations with the Creator, as the result of our progressive obedience to divine law (synonym of natural law), that appeared to me to be equally rational and consoling. The statements contained in this work in relation to the soul in the incarnate and disincarnate states, to the phenomena of birth and of death, to the beings loosely styled "angels" and "demons," to the

Digitized by Google

relations between the earth and the spirit-world, and to the various agencies by which the Almighty conducts the government of the universe and effects the gradual development and purification of all creatures, appeared to me to be fully consonant with reason and with the discoveries of modern science; as did also the views therein presented in regard to the plurality and hierarchy of worlds and of their inhabitants, and to the law of re-birth, which regulates and harmonizes all the phenomena of existence, through the progress thus made by each soul in intelligence and in its control of the elements of matter.

The perusal of this work brought home to my mind, more forcibly than ever before, the sense of the vastness of the universe and of the density of our ignorance of our relations, both with our own world and with the other worlds, which link all existences into one endless chain, and of the manner in which the laws of existence of a superior world are adapted to those of an inferior one (such as our earth evidently is), when a "Messiah," or special Messenger, is sent to it by God, to accomplish some great mission for the advancement of its people, and assumes, for this purpose, a body in harmony with his own spiritual degree, and yet relatively in harmony with the life of the men among whom he comes to mark out the paths of human regeneration, and to bring them the truth (which is life) under veils that adapt it to their present backwardness, but that are destined to be gradually withdrawn according to the growing receptivity of each succeeding age.

In "The Mediums' Book," by the same writer, I found a rational explanation of the possibility of communication between the people of the earth and those of the spirit-world, with practical instructions in regard to the exercise of mediumship, the dangers to be avoided in the exercise of this faculty, and the frame of mind best calculated to ensure a profitable result from our intercourse with disincarnate spirits.

I next reviewed the history of the world from the earliest times, and perceived that the records of all nations in all

Digitized by Google

ages fully confirm the fact of intercommunication between the people of the earth and the spirit-world, by the testimony of the most trustworthy historians.

I then directed my attention to the various religions and philosophies of our globe, and to the works of the most renowned poets and other writers who have most vividly reflected the manners and opinions of their age; and I thus arrived at the certainty that all of these bear witness (though obscurely, and with large intermixture of error) to the great truths which spirits of high degree are now, under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, preparing to bring more clearly to the knowledge of mankind.

I completed this course of preparatory elucidation by a perusal of the Old and New Testaments. Though I had tried to read these books before, I had never been able to do so, so obscure and unintelligible did they appear to me. But the Spiritist theory threw a new and brilliant light on the pages that had formerly defied all attempts on my part to penetrate their meaning, and showed me that the communication between the earth and the spirit-world is the instrument that has been employed by God in all ages for giving to men the light which each age could profitably receive, as the condition and means of progress. I thus perceived that the Divine Revelation is permanent and progressive.

Interpreting the Gospels with the aid of the Spiritist theory, I now saw that they assert, under the veil of the letter, the plurality and hierarchy of inhabited worlds, and the law of re-birth, as the sole means whereby men can "see the kingdom of God" and attain to the immortality which is their destiny.

But though I now understood the sublime morality of Jesus as emanating from a Divine source, and though much of the obscurity which had formerly surrounded the so-called "miracles" of the Gospels disappeared in the light of the Spiritist theory, my reason failed to comprehend the origin, nature, and authority of Jesus, his relations to God and to the human race, the various abnormal facts recorded of his

Digitized by Google

life, death, and resurrection, and his predictions of his second coming. I felt that human reason was unable to penetrate the darkness of the letter, and that a new revelation, explaining and completing the Hebraic and Messianic revelations, was necessary for the thinkers of our age.

Having thus arrived at an opinion based on inquiry and examination, it remained for me to submit this opinion to the test of experiment; for science and revelation must rest on laws of nature, and must proceed, by induction, from the known to the unknown. I therefore placed myself in communication with various mediums belonging to respectable families of our town. I sat with them daily, experimenting and carefully observing the manifestations elicited, and I was deeply impressed both with the importance of the teachings communicated, and with the constant inculcation, by the disincarnate intelligences with whom I thus found myself in communication, of charity and kindness towards the crowd of backward and unhappy spirits in the other world, who have not yet entered upon the path of repentance and expiation, but who may be aided to do so by the earnest and persevering efforts of those to whom they appeal for compassion, instruction, and advice.

This practical observation of Spiritist phenomena, both physical and intelligent, showed me that communication between the earth and the spirit-world is one of the laws of nature, and that there is no such barrier between the living and the so-called "dead" as, in my ignorance of that law, I had hitherto supposed to exist.

Continuing my experimental investigation, I speedily perceived that the mesmeric fluid plays an important part in all Spiritist phenomena, and that they are, in fact, inseparably connected; that fluid (which from its attractive and repellant action, may not improperly be termed "magnetism") being the universal agent and motor in all the realms of nature, and all the bodies of the universe being produced by magnetic attraction under the universal action of spirit. I accordingly entered on a theoretic and practical study of human magnetism, as a preparation for the study of spirit-magnetism,

Digitized by Google

which appeared to open up vast possibilities of future progress for mankind; my historical researches having shown me that human magnetism had existed in all ages, and that it had always been the vehicle of communication between mankind and the spirit-world.

I now began to regard the general outbreak of spirit-manifestation, all over the world, as a sign of the commencement of the new era predicted by Jesus and anticipated by many eminent modern writers.

Profoundly impressed with this presentiment, I earnestly, in 1861, besought of the Almighty to grant me the favour of a manifestation from the spirit of my father, and from John the Baptist (after whom I am named). The manifestations I so earnestly desired took place shortly afterwards, quite spontaneously, to the great surprise of the medium and to my unspeakable joy. By the messages thus transmitted, I was told that the new revelation promised by Jesus was already beginning—that the nations now devoted to the idolatry of wealth must be led to turn from this profane adoration, and to raise their thoughts aspiringly towards the celestial regions—and that spirits of high degree are charged by the Almighty to bring in a new era of freedom and fraternity, as the aim and result of the Spiritist movement now occurring all over the world, through the substitution of belief based on knowledge, in place of the unbelief which has grown out of ignorance, and of gentleness, justice, and kindness between all the members of the human family, in place of the pride and selfishness that now prevail. I was assured that the time has come for the fulfilment of the promises of Jesus, and that I should be permitted to take part in the work of preparing for the ushering in of the new era of truth and progress; that era which I had perceived to be approaching, and to which it was my most ardent desire to be allowed to consecrate my efforts.

I was still going on with my researches and experiments when, in the course of that same year, I was invited to call on Madame Collignon, a lady of our town, previously unknown to me, in order to see a large picture, medianimi-

Digitized by Google

cally produced, which purported to give a view of some of the worlds scattered through space. I did so; and a week afterwards, I again called on the lady, to thank her for having allowed me to see the picture.

After a short conversation on indifferent subjects, I rose to take my leave, when Madame Collignon felt her arm moved by the fluidic agitation so well known to mediums, and indicative of the presence of spirits who desire to write by their hand. Yielding to this impression, Madame Collignon's hand then wrote as follows:—

"The present age being an era of transition, some are busy overthrowing the ancient formulas, already tottering to their fall, and others are seeking to erect new ones, in which uneasy souls may rest. Those who overthrow do not trouble themselves about replacing what they destroy; those who seek to build up are uncertain as to the foundations on which they should build. It is the mission of Spiritism to prepare the site, to gather together the materials, and to lay the firm foundations, of the temple in which Truth shall have her altars, and from which she will diffuse her light.

"Men's minds are wavering between the doubts that beset their reason, and the yearning for a true faith that stirs their heart. To those who are thus groping in darkness, you must give the truth that shall become their beacon. To those who can no longer rest on the dogmas of the Church, you must offer the solid support of the New Revelation. You must show them that the grand and noble figure of Christ, looking down upon the world from the height of the ignominious Cross, is neither a myth nor a legend, but a reality whose true nature has been hidden by the veils that have obscured it, so that men have only seen an indistinct presentment, incapable of satisfying their reason. You must show the world the truths underlying what is regarded by those who reject the Gospels as falsehoods, and that those who defend the events therein narrated as 'miracles,' and those who deny them as 'impossible,' are equally in the wrong, because these events really occurred, but in virtue of the

Digitized by Google

laws of nature, and have only appeared to be 'miraculous,' or 'impossible,' because the world has hitherto been ignorant of these laws.

"It is for you, whom we have chosen as our mediums, to prepare the way for the new era and for the advent of him who is shortly to come among you, to trace out the road, and to begin the work, of reformation and renewal.

"For this purpose, we are about to give you the explanation of the Gospels which will pave the way for a unitary belief for all mankind. This explanation, emanating from the Spirit of Truth, will be a Revelation of the Revelation given in the Gospels.

"The time has come when the letter which killeth must be replaced by the spirit which giveth life. The letter has borne its fruits according to the various phases of human progress, and now it kills.

"Devote yourselves with zeal, perseverance, and courage, to the task which is thus laid upon you; remembering, with humility and charity, that you are only the instruments employed by God to show the truth to men.

"We shall notify you when we wish you to publish the explanations we are about to dictate to you, and which will unite all sincere seekers in a common faith."

(Signed) "MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN.

"*Assisted by the Apostles.*

"*December*, 1861."

This manifestation, calling on me to undertake, with the aid of the medium, Madame Collignon, a work of such great importance, filled us both with extreme surprise; but the joy we might otherwise have felt at being chosen for such an undertaking was sobered by our fear lest we should be incapable of accomplishing it worthily.

The commencement of our medianimic work having been fixed by our spirit-guides for the following week, we set ourselves resolutely at the time appointed to the discharge of the task, which we should certainly not have undertaken of our own accord, ignorant, blind, and incapable as we felt

Digitized by Google

ourselves to be, and which we could only hope to accomplish as the amanuenses of spirits far more advanced and enlightened than ourselves.

As the work of explanation proceeded, my mind was more and more filled with admiration of the truths that were thus shown to have been embodied in the Gospels, though, for providential ends, they had been surrounded by a veil of mystery that would necessarily lead men's reason to reject the letter of those writings in course of time. In the fervour of my thankfulness for the new light thus vouchsafed to me, I solemnly pledged myself anew to the discharge of the task to which I had been called, exclaiming, with entire sincerity, "My heart, my time, my reason, O my God! shall henceforth be entirely devoted to thy service; and happy indeed shall I be if, despite my weakness, I may become a useful instrument for inclining the love and reverence of thy creatures towards Thee, the Sovereign Master of all that is!"

In the prosecution of our work we had come to the words, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Matt. xix. 19), when the following was medianimically written:—

"When we have finished our commentary on the Gospels, we shall give you explanations concerning the commandments of the Decalogue, and the love of God and the neighbour, which you will append as a supplement to our work on the Gospels."

(Signed) "MOSES, MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN.
"*Assisted by the Apostles.*"

On the conclusion of the work on which we had been engaged, the order to publish the explanations thus medianimically transmitted was given me in May, 1865, in the following words:—

"The old, worn-out doctrines, originating in ages of barbarism, intolerance, and cupidity, have so disgusted the modern mind, that men, repudiating the very idea of religion, are losing their belief in God and their hope of

Digitized by Google

immortality. A new light must therefore be thrown upon the chaos in which they are wandering, to show them the path they have missed for so many ages. This light will be given by Spiritism, which is destined to rekindle the love of God and of the neighbour now dying out in the human heart; to bring back to a reverent belief in God the atheists who imagine that they live only by matter; and to win the affection of mankind for the pure and glorious Spirit who came, commissioned by God, to lead them all back, purified and ennobled, to the common Father.

"For a long time past the personality of Jesus has led to wide differences of opinion. Those who could not believe in the divinity attributed to him by the Church have endeavoured to represent him as a man; but this representation was as irreconcilable with the tenor of the Gospel narrative, and with the facts of human nature, as the divinity erroneously attributed to him by the Church. The idea of Jesus as the 'Man-God' was an absurdity; his devotion, a delusion; his self-sacrifice, a lie; his purity, a necessary consequence of his divinity. On the other hand, Jesus, regarded as a man of flesh, like the men of your planet, was a problem no less inexplicable; and, if he were a man like other men, the so-called 'miracles' performed by him, the disappearance of his body from the tomb while the seal on the stone that closed its entrance remained intact, his resurrection, his subsequent appearances to his followers, and his ascension to the ethereal regions, could only be regarded as fanciful tales, fitted to amuse a generation of slight advancement, but that must necessarily be rejected as fables by minds arrived at a higher degree of scientific knowledge.

"The explanation of the Gospels which we have given you, and which, by our command, you are now to publish, will show men that Jesus is the Protector and Ruler of your planet; that he presided at its formation; and that he directs its development, devoting himself to the progress and advancement of its inhabitants.

"It will show them that he assumed, for the accomplish-

Digitized by Google

ment of his mission upon the earth, a body in harmony with his own higher nature, and relatively in harmony with the material conditions of your planet, in order that the seeds of truth, the time for the sowing of which had then arrived, should be sown by him as appointed by the ordering of the Almighty, and should be left to germinate and to grow, giving rise to much contradictory speculation, until the progress of human intelligence should have reached a point which would render it possible to unfold the hidden meanings that, as the grain which has come to maturity within the protecting folds of the blade and the husk of its earlier growth, shall produce the rich harvest foreseen by the sower—viz., the furnishing of the true basis of belief in God and of charity for all mankind, and the true key to the comprehension of the nature, acts, and mission of Jesus, who came to show you how to live and how to die for the achievement of the progress of the human spirit; the great law of re-birth and re-incarnation as the sole road to purification and progress, and which alone can reconcile the Divine Justice with the apparent injustice of Fate; and the primordial, fundamental, and definitive faith in the existence of the one sole, omnipotent Creator of all that is; in the eternal duration of the intelligent principle; and in the continuity of existences—expiatory at first, and then glorious —for all the souls who have fallen from their first estate.

"But be assured, and assure your brethren, that this explanation, which we have charged you to bring to their consideration, is still only preparatory and incomplete, being an adaptation of the truth to the present state of your world, a preface to the work of him whom the Master is about to send to you, to enlighten the human mind by a further freeing of the spirit from the veils of the letter.

"The mission of him who will carry forward the work of revelation, and whose first Messianic years will be witnessed by your generation, will still be only preparatory; and, after him, a succession of Messiahs, or special messengers of God, will succeed one another, until the new day shall have dawned for the whole human race.

Digitized by Google

"In the work which we have now accomplished through your instrumentality, we have given our own names, in order to avoid mentioning Him who, through our intermediary, has directed our labours, and who will direct the successive workers through whom we shall carry on the work of revelation committed to us by Him.

"What you are now to publish is only the first part of what we have to give you. The second part will be (1) a refutation of the objections that will be made to our explanation of the Gospels and Commandments, and (2) a similar explanation of the Acts of the Apostles, of those passages of the Epistles which corroborate the present work, and of the Apocalypse.

"Be of good cheer, faithful labourers! The Master will not overlook the sincerity of your devotion.

(Signed) "MOSES, MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN.

"*Assisted by the Apostles.*

"*May*, 1865."

My duty, as a simple instrument, is to execute the command of those who have employed me, by publishing this work, which is not mine but theirs, and which makes manifest the essentiality of all that is sublime in the beneficent paternity of God, and in the self-abnegation and fraternal devotion of Jesus, who is called the Christ, and who so well deserves the title of Saviour of the World and Protector of the Earth.

The duty of my brethren, whoever they may be and whatever may be their religious opinions, is to suspend their judgment of the work I now offer them, until they have read the entire book from beginning to end, and seriously reflected upon it as a whole, of which all the parts mutually sustain and uphold the others.

At every epoch of the life of our planet, man is at liberty to accept or reject the light which is offered him. But much is required of him to whom much has been given, and a spirit's responsibility is always measured by the means of instruction which it has possessed.

Digitized by Google

Before Truth can triumph, it must necessarily contend with the contradictions of error; for the whole truth can never be revealed at once, but only such a measure of revelation as men's minds are ready to receive and to profit by: and error, though doomed to perish with the progress of intelligence, is none the less preparatory to the reception of the truth, whose eventual triumph it ensures through the inquiry it excites by its attacks.

The work which the ministers of the Highest have caused us to write has for its aim the purification and happiness of the human race, and the exaltation of the glory of God. Preparing the ground of a common religious belief, it furnishes the true basis of human fraternity; and it will thus fulfil the promises of the Master by bringing in the Kingdom of God on earth, under the law of love and unity. And we publish this book in full confidence that it will attain its end.

J. B. ROUSTAING.

BORDEAUX, *June*, 1865.

Digitized by Google

INTRODUCTION

BY THE EDITOR.

THIS work, emanating from spirits of high degree, is designed to throw light on everything which has appeared obscure, and to demonstrate the truth of everything which has been regarded as false, in the great work of the Messianic Revelation, accomplished by Jesus, and recorded in the Gospels. It shows that the doctrine of Jesus is, as he said, "not his own doctrine, but the doctrine of Him who sent him," and that it is the source of all truth and progress for mankind; the lode-star of humanity for the fulfilment of its destinies. It shows that the worship instituted by Jesus is wholly spiritual; inwardly by prayer and self-examination, and outwardly by kindness, charity, and the giving of mutual aid in all the various relations of life. It shows that the Baptism of Water, instituted by John the Baptist, and continued by the disciples of Jesus, was a transitory rite, intended for the Christian era under the veil of the letter, and adapted to the needs of the men of that period, but destined, under the empire of the Spirit, and during the new era of the Christianity of Christ, to be wholly spiritual, symbolising the repentance to which all must be called, and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is the assistance and protection of good spirits, whom men should always endeavour to attract to themselves by humility, justice, and charity. It shows that the Paschal meal partaken of by Jesus and his disciples, and which has been made the foundation of an external human worship, was in reality the last solemn appeal made by Christ to human fraternity, and should be retained under the new dispensation as a bond of fraternal union, apart from all

Digitized by Google

external forms of worship. When men shall have learned to practise the two commandments which Christ proclaimed to be the fulfilling of the law and the prophets, and shall love the Creator above all things and their neighbour as themselves, they will no longer worship the Father on the mountain, nor in Jerusalem, but will become more and more the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, through the noble activity of their charity, humility, study, science, and mutual aid in the cause of progress; for all the members of the human race will then be for each, and each for all. It also shows that this purification and transformation of the earth can only be accomplished when the tares shall have been separated from the wheat, at the time appointed by Providence for its regeneration, when those who still persist in evil will be "cast into outer darkness;" in other words, will be removed from the earth, and cast down to worlds of a lower degree of advancement, where they will expiate their obstinacy, their rebellion against moral progress, and their wilful blindness, in conditions appropriate to their culpability and to their need of expiation, reparation, and progress.

The present work, co-extensive with the Gospels, which it explains in spirit and in truth, forms a compact whole, of which every part is necessary to explain and complete the rest. It throws new light on the knowledge of the Father; it teaches who is the Son, by revealing to men the origin and nature of Jesus, and his position with reference to God and to our planet; and it also reveals the origin of the Soul, its phases, aims, and destinies in infinity and eternity. It makes known the extra-human nature of the body which Jesus assumed for his manifestation in the world as God's messenger among men, and the manner in which this manifestation was effected. It explains all the events called "mysteries" or "miracles," and shows that they took place according to the laws of nature. It explains the words spoken by Jesus under the guise of parable and the veil of the letter; the actions performed by him; and his predictions relative to the future of our planet and its humanity, and the

Digitized by Google

manner in which they will be fulfilled: thus revealing the grandeur and importance of his mission in the past, the present, and the future.

"All things," said Jesus, "have been given into my hands by my Father, and no one knoweth the Son except the Father, and no one knoweth the Father except the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him."

In speaking thus, Jesus proclaimed the unlimited supremacy, authority, and powers which God has given him over our planet and its inhabitants, and the necessity of successive and progressive revelations in the past, the present, and the future, to reveal who is the Son and who is the Father. He alone is commissioned to make these revelations, through the ages, by errant and incarnate missionaries, charged to give to man what his intelligence is able to receive, proportionate to the receptivity of each succeeding era. Thus, just as the revelations given to the Hebrews by Moses and the Prophets contained promises of future revelations by announcing the advent of the Messiah, so the revelation of the Gospel made by Christ, the promised Messiah, contains promises of the future revelations of the Spirit of Truth.

Jesus said, "Eternal life consists in the knowledge of Thee, the only true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." He thus bore witness both to the undivided unity of the Father, and likewise to the greatness of the mission which had been entrusted to him by the Father, to lead men, whose guidance he had accepted, on the path of intellectual, moral, and social progress.

God.

During the Pagan and Hebrew ages, the existence of occult or open relations between incarnate and disincarnate spirits commenced the work of eternal life, by revealing to men the existence of God as the Creator and Sovereign Master of the Universe, and the fact of communication between the spirit-world and mankind as one of the laws of nature, and therefore eternal. These relations between men and the

Digitized by Google

various classes of disincarnate spirits, both good and evil, gave rise to polytheism; but, among all nations and in all religions, the idea of the Divine Unity was preserved by the initiated, and dominated over all the secondary divinities worshipped by the masses, who were intentionally kept in ignorance and error by their rulers for their own selfish ends.*

The Hebrew nation acquired the Pagan beliefs in Egypt; for these prevailed among the Egyptians as well as among other nations. They were placed under the leadership of Moses to inaugurate the preparatory era, which was carried on by the succession of Hebrew prophets, until the time appointed for the advent of the promised Messiah.

In accordance with the necessity for linking together the past and present in the development of beliefs, the Hebrew revelation proclaimed God to be the Eternal and only God, the God of Gods. "God," said the Hebrew prophet, "has taken his place in the assembly of the Gods, and seated in the midst of them, he judges the Gods. . . . . I said, Ye are Gods, and ye are all the sons of the Most High."

Thus the Hebrew revelation prepared the way for the knowledge of the one sole and only God, the uncreated Creator, Source and Author of all that exists.

Jesus carried on the knowledge of the Father, that had already been imparted by the Hebrew revelation, and by missionary spirits among the Gentiles, by saying, "God is a spirit." These words were intended to do away with anthropomorphism, and to pave the way for a purer idea of the Godhead, having regard to the distinction which must always obtain between the infinite and the finite; between that which is without limits, and that which is circumscribed; and, consequently, between the uncreated Creator and the creature. The Apostle Paul was one of the organs of the Spirit of Truth, under the dominion of the letter, and was inspired by the spirits of the Lord, who aided him in the accomplishment of his mission. He spoke words which,

* These truths had long been known among the Gentiles, for Socrates was made to drink the hemlock 400 years before Christ.

Digitized by Google

like those of Jesus, were intended to aid in the development of human knowledge respecting the Divine nature, and to provide the means of purifying the beliefs formed under the empire of the letter, which subsequently perverted and falsified the Messianic revelation.* "And there is no other God but one alone. For even if there are those who are called gods, either in heaven or on earth, as if there were many gods and many lords, yet to us there is one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him" (1 Cor. viii. 4–6). "From him, and through him, and in him are all things" (Rom. xi. 36). "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28). "He is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who alone hath immortality,† dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man hath seen or can see, to whom be honour and age-long dominion" (1 Tim. v. 18, 19). "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you the spirit of wisdom and enlightenment in knowing him" (Eph. i. 17).

According to the words of Jesus and of Paul, the Spirit of Truth has now come to shed new light upon our knowledge of the Father by the present revelation, and to correct the erroneous ideas which have grown out of the obscurity of the letter.

This Revelation of the Revelation shows man the Father, who is the only true God, immutable, eternal, the Uncreated Creator, One and Indivisible, the sole and only Principle of Life, who has in himself all existence from all eternity, through his divine essence as the emanating principle of all things. He regulates universal life, harmony, and progress, according to laws which are as immutable and eternal as his essence and will, from whence they proceed, by means of agents, occult or visible, errant or incarnate, directing every-

* The words of Paul are explained in the commentary on the first verse of the first chapter of John.

† Every creature must be born, die, and be born again before arriving at eternal life, reason, and free will. See the commentary on the three first Gospels (§§ 55 et seq.) on the origin of the Spirit.

Digitized by Google

thing according to his infinite justice, wisdom, and goodness, under the operation of the great law of magnetic attraction, in the spiritual, fluidic, and material orders. He is the Spirit of Spirits, the Being of Beings, Intelligence, Thought, and Fluid, ruling over everything which depends upon him. The universal fluid proceeding from him is the instrument and means of all creations, through the combinations and transformations effected by it. He thus produces diversity in unity, for the development and progress of spiritual essences, spirits, worlds, and bodies; and he thus creates life and universal harmony in space and time. He creates the spiritual essence (which is the principle of intelligence, consisting of intelligence, thought, and fluid), by means of a subtle combination, of which the essence is found only in the divine radiation. This principle is destined to become a formed spirit, capable of endless development and progression; for everything proceeds from and returns to God, through successive purifications and transformations, from the inferiority of the initial starting-point to the attainment of individuality and immortality. He thus causes the spiritual essences to pass through the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms for development and progress, under the supervision of guardian spirits, until they reach the precincts of individualized personality, thus arriving at the period preparatory to the state of formed spirit. When the spiritual essence has passed through the preparatory periods, it becomes individualized, and is ushered into the state of innocence, simplicity, and ignorance, in which it acquires the knowledge of its faculties and actions. It thus receives the precious but dangerous gift of reason and free-will, and is raised to the state of a spirit possessed of independent consciousness. Having thus become a responsible creature, endowed with free-will and understanding, and the power of independent action, it becomes capable of choosing its path under the friendly advice and direction of its guides. If it fails, it becomes humanized, and suffers human incarnation on the primitive or other worlds, under conditions appropriate to the degree of its guilt, and to its need of expiation and

Digitized by Google

progress. If it remains steadfast, it proceeds gradually and steadily in the path of progress, remaining obedient to the advice of its guides, until it has reached (without failure, and therefore without humanization) the culminating point of perfection, and has thus become a fully developed and unfallen spirit, of perfect and immaculate purity. But all spirits—both those who have fallen and have been purified by expiatory incarnations, and then glorified, and the unfallen spirits who have always remained pure are originally equal, start from the same point, and will finally arrive, though by different routes, at the same goal of perfection; each spirit receiving according to its works.* God has no preference for any of his creatures, and none of them will, in the long run, be disinherited.

Thus the New Revelation explains the meaning of the words of Jesus, "My Father and I judge no one;" "I judge no one."

Jesus.

By some, Jesus is looked upon as having been, as regards his corporeal envelope, a man like themselves, clothed with a fleshly body, liable to death like that of the men of our planet, and as having been born of a human mother, like other men. But they also regard him as God himself, miraculously incarnated, conceived and born of a virgin by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Thus they regard Jesus as a God-Man or Man-God, and attribute divinity to him by believing him to be God made man, divine, and yet mortal like themselves. They also assert that he really died on Calvary, and that he was resuscitated by the return of his spirit into a human corpse.

Others regard Jesus as having been a man of flesh and blood like themselves, the son of Joseph and Mary; and they suppose that he really died on Calvary, and did not rise again.

These two opinions, which have always existed under

* Compare the Commentary on the first three Gospels, §§ 55, 56 et seq.

Digitized by Google

the veil of the letter, separate those who call themselves orthodox Christians from those who call themselves Free-thinkers. It was intended that these differences of opinion should exist, in order that men might be gradually led on by the progress of mental and moral development to the New Revelation, which was to be given when, in the course of ages, the field should have been prepared for its reception by the thinkers whose efforts bore witness at once to the activity of human reason, and to its inability to rend the veil of mystery which covers the Hebrew and Messianic revelations, thus proving the necessity for this New Revelation, that the previous ones may be explained instead of being rejected.

Everything in the successive revelations given to mankind has its use according to the foreknowledge of God, and contributes to the development of humanity, and to its advance on the path of intellectual and moral progress. These revelations are always appropriate to the necessities of each era, and are proportioned to what man is able to receive and to comprehend, under the influence of the circumstances, prejudices, and traditions amidst which he finds himself.

God, in his infinite wisdom, knew under what conditions Jesus must manifest himself to men in accomplishing his earthly mission, in order that it should yield its desired fruits as the means of their regeneration, and the guide to their attainment of eternal life; and should accomplish its aim in reference to the destinies of our planet and its humanity, through the knowledge that was to be gradually obtained from it by men, concerning the nature and mission of Jesus, and concerning the Father, who is the One True God; to which knowledge they have been slowly conducted by successive revelations. Everything had been prepared to this end, through long ages, by the Hebrew Revelation, and by missionary spirits among the Gentiles; and all was ready for the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus upon the earth.

The Hebrew Revelation had announced the coming of

Digitized by Google

the Messiah under a double aspect—firstly, with a human origin and nature, as being of the posterity of Abraham and of the house of David; and secondly, under the obscurity of the letter, with an extra-human origin and nature, miraculously born of a virgin, and thus divine. Wherefore "men should call him Emmanuel, or God with us."

According to the literal interpretation of the prophets, the Jews expected the promised Messiah to be the Son of David, and a Liberator who should lead them to conquer their national independence; and Mary and Joseph were advanced spirits who had incarnated themselves in order to aid in the fulfilment of the Hebrew Revelation, by preparing the scene of the appearance of Jesus on the earth, and thus opening the way for the accomplishment of his mission. It was appointed them to receive the Messiah, firstly, under the dominion of the letter, and then to receive the true explanation of his nature and mission under the empire of the Spirit, the new era of the Christianity of Christ.

At the time appointed by God for the advent of Jesus, the revelation made by the angel to Mary and Joseph was made in such a way as to ensure its being kept secret during the Master's mission; and it was only made known afterwards by the disciples to whom Mary had secretly divulged it, at the right time to be useful, under the influence and inspiration of the Spirits of the Lord.

The angel said to Mary, "You have found favour in the eyes of the Lord." These words really meant, "The time is come for the accomplishment of the mission which you have asked and obtained."

(Luke i. 30–35; Matth. i. 18–23.)—Jesus made his appearance among men under the auspices of the Hebrew Revelation, as regarded his supposed human origin and nature. He appeared to the Hebrews to be a man like themselves, and a prophet, the son of David by descent, and immediately of Mary and Joseph; the revelation made to Mary and Joseph, which excluded the paternity of the latter, remaining secret.

Digitized by Google

When the earthly mission of Jesus had been accomplished and the revelation of the Angel to Mary and Joseph had been made known, his personality became a mystery to the disciples and the multitude. He was looked upon as the son of David; at first, as the son of Joseph and Mary, and then of Mary only. He belonged to humanity by his death on Calvary, for he was regarded as having suffered real death, like the men of our planet; and he was divine, as being the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and risen from the dead. His life upon the earth was also regarded by them as a continual miracle, both physical and moral; an opinion resulting from his superhuman actions, the literal interpretation of some of his words, his death and resurrection, his appearances to the women and to the disciples, his ascension to heaven, and the other incidents of his earthly mission.

The field was thus left open to human interpretations and contradictions; but everything was prepared for the fulfilment both of the Hebrew revelation and of that made by the Angel to Mary and Joseph, firstly by the mission of Jesus himself, and afterwards by the missions of the Apostles (especially the Apostle Paul), who were guided by superior spirits to carry out their work in such a manner as to lead men on, through the ages, with the aid of missionary spirits, to the advent of the Spirit, the giving of the New Revelation that was to come, at the appointed time, to replace the letter, which killeth, by the Spirit, which giveth life.

Before the close of the first century of the Christian era, the four Evangelists, who were incarnated for the purpose, wrote their Gospels under the influence and inspiration of the spirits of the Lord, at the time appointed, and according to the mental state, the needs, and aspirations of the period. These records were designed, by the will of God, to mutually explain and complete each other, and to preserve and transmit to future generations the great work of the Messianic Revelation, and the moral code for the redemption of the world. They form an imperishable monument, the work of the Spirit of Truth; and everything false or

Digitized by Google

apocryphal, resulting from human errors, will sooner or later fall before them. They were destined to become the source and rule of faith for all time; firstly, under the empire of the letter, next under the rule of the Spirit, and afterwards for ever, being progressively explained and developed by the Spirit of Truth.

It is through the earthly mission of Jesus and the Apostles that everything which was ordained to take place during the empire of the letter has been accomplished, and that everything which is to take place under the empire of the Spirit must now be accomplished.

The Jews regarded the Holy Spirit as God himself, manifesting himself to men by some action; and they were consequently led to attribute a divine origin to Jesus by a literal interpretation of the Hebrew and Angelic revelations. They regarded the birth of Jesus, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, as a real but miraculous and mysterious incarnation of God himself, at once human as regards his body, and divine as regards his soul. Interpreting literally the Angel's words, "Son of the Most High," "Son of God," and certain expressions of Jesus isolated from their context, such as "My Father," and being unable otherwise to explain his pure and spotless life and the various abnormal details of his sojourn upon the earth, they came to regard Jesus, the Son of David and the Son of Mary, as God himself, miraculously incarnated; God made man, dead, and risen again; thus attributing divinity to Jesus, under the combined influence of Hebrew traditions and the circumstances around them. In the confused gatherings of Jews and Gentiles at the commencement of the Christian era of the letter—some of the early Christians being influenced by Monotheism and others by Polytheism, and the Holy Spirit being generally regarded as God manifesting himself to men—there arose the idea of a Triune God, consisting of three distinct persons, separating and re-uniting themselves at pleasure. Those who held this dogma, endeavouring thus to retain unity in plurality, failed to perceive the mingled Pantheism and Polytheism of such a theory. Firstly, there was God the

Digitized by Google

Father, who himself effected the incarnation of his Son, and who afterwards, when Jesus was entering on his public career, caused his voice to be heard on the banks of the Jordan, in the presence of John the Baptist, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Secondly, there was God the Son, at once a man and the Son of God, God in flesh; and thirdly, there was God the Holy Spirit, who descended upon Jesus on the banks of the Jordan under the bodily form of a dove. And these Three Gods were One God

But these human aberrations, arising in the infancy of Christianity, were not destined to remain without contradiction; for their reign was to be only transitory, and they were to disappear under the action of reason and science, clearing the road for the advent of the Spirit. But the infinite wisdom of God did not permit these opinions to be overthrown until the time had arrived when they could be replaced by the truths of a new Revelation.

These erroneous interpretations of the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations, and of the earthly missions of Jesus and the Apostles, which first arose in the early days of Christianity, prevailed more especially during the fourth and sixteenth centuries, and have continued until our own times. They exhibit the efforts and struggles of human reason, which have gradually prepared the way for the principle of free inquiry, and thus for the advent of the Spirit of Truth. But men have struggled in darkness and a mingling of truth and error, without being able to solve the mystery, or to remove the veil of the letter from the spirit; and they have finally rejected both the Hebrew and Messianic Revelations, and now regard Jesus as a man of flesh and blood, the son of Joseph and Mary. They consequently reject as fabulous the so-called "supernatural" occurrences recorded in the Gospels. These human opinions sprang from the inability of human intelligence, aided by the freest examination, to replace the letter by the Spirit, and to explain the origin and real nature of Jesus Christ, and of his authority, powers, and mission in

Digitized by Google

reference to our planet and its people, the nature of the body which he assumed, the mode of its formation by the Holy Spirit, and the object and motive of this apparently miraculous origin.

From the first period of the era inaugurated by Christ, some have maintained the literal truth of the first phase of the Hebrew Revelation, which announced the coming Messiah as of the posterity of Abraham and of the house of David, but have rejected the literal interpretation of the Hebrew and Angelic revelations respecting the extra-human origin and nature of Jesus; maintaining, like the chief priests and Pharisees and their adherents, who rejected him as an impostor, that he was a man of flesh and blood like themselves, the son of Joseph and Mary, that he really died on Calvary, and that he was not raised from the dead. But this retrograde opinion, which contradicts the letter and the spirit of both Revelations, must give way to the New Revelation, just as the Hebrew era has had to give way to the Christian, in the accomplishment of the destinies of humanity.

Others, setting aside the letter of the Hebrew Revelation respecting the human origin and nature of Jesus, and accepting the letter of the Angelic Revelation respecting his miraculous birth by the operation of the Holy Spirit, seek to explain it by asserting that Jesus had not a real human body, but a body of celestial substance, and that he was born of Mary without in any way detracting from her virginity, as light passes through crystal. This explanation, also, exhibits both the efforts of human reason to solve the mystery and raise the veil of the letter, and their inability to do so. It erred in partially freeing itself from the yoke of the letter, and in thus coming into collision with the prejudices of the age, while the time for the advent of the New Revelation was still far distant. It was an hypothesis within the bonds of the letter, but outside the truth, explaining nothing, unintelligible as the letter itself, and only substituting one mystery and miracle for another. It remained isolated and inoperative on the masses during the course

Digitized by Google

of ages; but it was a sign-post set on the path of the future, which men would observe at the time of the revelation of the Spirit of Truth.

Others, again, reject entirely the letter of the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations respecting both the human origin of Jesus, and his extra-human origin by the operation of the Holy Spirit. They deny the humanity ascribed to Jesus either as the son of Mary and Joseph, or as the son of Mary only; and assert that Jesus assumed a factitious or spirit-body, in which he descended from Heaven. This opinion, like the last, exhibits the inability of human intelligence to penetrate the veil of the letter, and likewise erred in opposing the prejudices and necessities of the age, and in abandoning the letter before the time had come for the Advent of the Spirit. It offered an hypothesis which was contrary both to the letter of the two revelations and to the events which had been accomplished before the eyes of men, as far as they had been able to understand them, and only substituted one mystery and miracle for another. Being the result of premature and impotent efforts, it, too, remained isolated and without effect upon the masses; but it also remained as a sign-post on the path of the future, which men would observe at the time of the New Revelation. The opinion which, as stated above, arose according to the letter, in the infancy of Christianity, had prevailed from the earliest times among the Pagan nations, to whom the miraculous fecundation of virgins by a divinity, whose offspring were both human and divine, was a familiar idea, universally accepted; and the Jews had become imbued with this idea during the Captivity. There was nothing surprising to them in the letter of the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations, respecting either the human and extra-human nature of Jesus through his miraculous conception by the Virgin Mary, or in his miraculous incarnation, at once human and divine, as a creation of the divine will; and these revelations were received literally by them, conformably with their ideas and traditions. Regarding these events as mysteries or miracles, they did not attempt to explain or understand them.

Digitized by Google

But the divinity ascribed to Jesus was from the beginning denied by many, especially in the fourth and sixteenth centuries, at both of which periods speculations regarding the origin and nature of Jesus were rife. In the fourth century, Arius and his followers denied the divinity of the Word, and maintained that the Son of God was a creature created out of nothing, capable of virtue and vice, who was not God in reality, but only by participation, like all the other creatures who are called Gods, and that, although the Son of God might have existed before the ages, he was not co-eternal with God. In the sixteenth century, Lælius and Faustus Socinus in like manner denied the divinity attributed to Christ. Socinus even maintained that the Arians had ascribed too much dignity and importance to him, denied the pre-existence of the Word, maintained that the Holy Spirit was not a distinct person, that the Father alone was properly called God, and that, although the title of God was given to Jesus Christ in the Hebrew Scriptures, it was not used in the same sense as when applied to the Father, and only meant that the Father, the only True God, had given him a sovereign power over all his creatures, and had thus made him worthy of the adoration of angels and of men.

These controversies, due to the darkness of the letter and the subtleties of the schoolmen, profoundly affected the masses, giving rise to doubt and incredulity among Christians in regard to the double nature of Jesus, as man and also as God the Son. Being still in the bonds of the letter, these controversies were a mingling of truth with error. They were true in so far as they maintained that Jesus was not truly God, but was a creature of God; that the Father alone could properly be called God; and that, if the term God was applied to Jesus in the Hebrew Scriptures, it was only because God had conferred upon him a sovereign power over our planet and its humanity. They were also true in asserting that the Holy Spirit was not a distinct person, according to the assertion of the Church, in the doctrine of the Three Persons of the Godhead But these

Digitized by Google

controversies erred in asserting that Jesus was a creature capable of vice as well as of virtue, and that he had no existence prior to the formation of the world. Arising amid the darkness of the letter, they were unable to explain what was meant by the Holy Spirit in the revelation of the Angel; and they thus allowed the interpretation attached to it by Hebrew traditions to maintain its ground.

In consequence of this confusion of opinions respecting the origin and nature of Jesus, and of human inability to solve the mystery of the letter, the men of the Reformation were unable to replace the ideas which belonged to the past by those which should form the basis of belief in the future. Their work was consequently accomplished without this replacing of the false by the true; and the Reformation necessarily accepted, and still maintains, opinions based upon the letter in the infancy of Christianity. But although premature and ineffective, all the efforts of human reason were destined to prepare the world for the advent of the New Revelation. All are so many sign-posts for the future, and aid in the progressive separation of truth from error.

The controversies that have arisen since the Reformation, under the influence of reason, which more and more distinctly refused to accept the defective beliefs of earlier ages that are still taught dogmatically as "miracles," have revived the old retrograde idea that Jesus Christ was of the same nature as the men of our planet, and was born, lived, and died like other men; they thus reject everything in the two Revelations which cannot be explained according to the known laws of nature. Nevertheless, although these infantile beliefs have falsified the meaning of both the Hebrew and Messianic Revelations, both have been preserved as a deposit for the new era; for it was intended that the old opinions, which maintained the reality of the abnormal events recorded in the Gospels, should only fade away in the light of the new era of the Christianity of Christ, in the luminous rays of the Spirit of Truth, who comes to clear up, by the Revelation of the earlier Revelation, everything which has hitherto remained obscure, and to show the

Digitized by Google

natural causes of what has been affirmed or denied as beyond the pale of the laws of nature. These old opinions are not to be rejected because they cannot be understood literally, but must be explained by the Spirit of Truth, who will thus produce a unity of opinion among all mankind, through the alliance of Faith and Reason.

Jesus is not God;* he never claimed to be God; and all his sayings, whether purposely veiled or not, were so arranged as to serve the time at which they were uttered, and to prepare the basis and elements of the future Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which he predicted and promised. He protested against the divinity which was attributed to him by saying, "My Father is greater than I." He is not God, for God is one; and there is no other God but the Father, who is the only true God, from whom each and all derive their being; who is above all; beside whom all other beings are only creatures. But Jesus Christ was not a man of flesh and blood like the men of our planet, for the human body can only be formed according to the laws which govern generation in our world. God never contravenes the laws of nature, which are as immutable as his will, whence they emanate from all eternity. The revelation made by the Angel, or Superior Spirit, to Mary and Joseph, is not to be rejected because it cannot be understood literally, but must be explained by the adaptation to our world of laws of nature which govern worlds of higher degree. The body with which Jesus was clothed during his mission on the earth was formed independently of human generation, by an extra-human process. But this truth was veiled by the letter of the Revelation, according to the needs and receptivity of the age. The words of the Angel were designed to be useful at the time, and preparatory to the future Revelation of the Spirit of Truth. "That which was born in her was formed by the Holy Spirit," and its "birth" took place only in appearance, and in perfect accordance with natural law.

Jesus Christ was not subject to death like ourselves.

* Compare the commentary on the Gospel of John, § 1.

Digitized by Google

He did not die on Calvary, and was not raised again, as commonly supposed, by the return of his spirit to a human corpse; for the laws which govern our planet do not permit a spirit to re-enter the corpse it has quitted, to unite itself to corruption, and to resume its human life.

If Jesus had suffered real death, he could not have risen again with his dead body. If this had been a human body, the phenomena which followed his crucifixion could not have taken place. The disappearance of the body from the tomb while the stone which closed the entrance was sealed; the disappearance of Jesus from the eyes of the two disciples whom he met on the road to Emmaus, while he was at table with them; and his two successive appearances among his disciples, when the door was closed from fear of the Jews, would have been impossible, because contrary to the laws of nature. Nevertheless, all these events really took place, and were beheld by many witnesses. That the body which constituted his life in the eyes of men, as the instrument by means of which he accomplished his earthly mission, both before and after the Crucifixion, was not a human body, is evident from his own declaration concerning it:—"I lay down my life, and take it up again; no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again; this is the command which I have received of my Father."

What, then, was the nature of the body assumed by Jesus? How was this body formed, and according to what laws of nature? And how were these laws adapted to our earth? What was the real meaning of the "Miraculous Conception" by the operation of the Holy Spirit? If it was not real, because contrary to the laws of nature, and was only apparent, by what means and for what purpose were those appearances produced—appearances which Mary herself believed to be a reality?

These questions cannot be evaded, for Jesus has said, "There is nothing secret which shall not be known, and nothing hidden which shall not be revealed."

Digitized by Google

Those who represent Jesus as God himself made man, clothed with a human body, having died, and having risen again by the return of the spirit to a corpse, shelter themselves under the false and senseless term of "supernatural," implying a departure from the laws of nature. They admit everything in the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations, and in the Master's earthly career, not only without being able, but even without trying, to explain what they call "mysteries" and departures from the laws of nature; rejecting and condemning, in the name of dogmatic authority, which permits neither examination nor discussion, all the arguments which weigh against their opinions. On the other hand, the representatives of free inquiry, who deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, do so without being able to explain his origin and nature, and his position in reference to God and our planet. Regarding Jesus as a man, they delight in opposing the advocates of the orthodox opinions by saying, "The laws of nature are immutable, and any departure from them is impossible; therefore the basis on which you rest your dogmas is false, which proves them to be false also." After this easy triumph, they reject (for want of being able to understand them) all statements in the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations, and in the Gospels, which they are unable to explain; not admitting the existence of any laws in nature but those with which they are already acquainted.

Thus, partly from the impotence of blind faith, and partly from that of human reason when groping amid the darkness of the letter, the activity of modern inquiry, in relation to the Gospel narratives, has led only to negation, which, destroying without replacing, has left men's minds unsettled and their faith uncertain, not knowing where to rest.

While the fields of the Hebrew, Angelic, and Messianic Revelations have been tilled in all directions, for nearly two thousand years, by the exertions of thinkers under the veil of the letter, human reason has remained unable to explain, in accordance with the laws of nature, the various problems of the nature and mission of Jesus Christ; the necessity,

Digitized by Google

object, and end of the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations respecting him, the nature of the "Miraculous Conception" by the agency of the Holy Spirit, and what is meant by the Holy Spirit. Now that the beliefs which arose out of the letter in the infancy of Christianity have become insufficient and mischievous, leaving faith without nutriment, a new Revelation has become necessary to show the reality, according to the laws of nature, of those events which for want of this explanation have come to be regarded as fables. This Revelation of Revelation, which will usher in the Christianity of Christ, comes to fulfil the words of Jesus and of Paul—"It is the Spirit which giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak to you are spirit and life;" "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." It comes when the progress of intelligence has paved the way for it during successive centuries; when the phenomena of somnambulism have revealed the existence of the magnetic fluid, its action on the human organism, the disengagement of the spirit during magnetic somnambulism, and the relations of the disengaged spirit with the invisible world; and when the connection between the invisible and visible worlds, and between errant and incarnate spirits, has been made known by a general manifestation which has revealed the existence, action, and effects of spirit-magnetism, for which human magnetism and somnambulism had prepared the way. Lastly, the Spiritist Revelation,* by which missionary spirits have inaugurated the new era, has prepared men for the full explanation of the natural causes of the events called "miracles" in the great work of the Messianic Revelation.

The New Revelation gives this full and complete explanation of the Gospels. It shows the natural causes of the events called "miracles," and corrects all the errors which have arisen, from the darkness of the letter, respecting the nature and origin of Jesus, and his position towards God and our planet; the nature of the body which he assumed

* The basis of which is formulated in the works of Allan Kardec—viz., "The Spirits' Book," "The Mediums' Book," &c.

Digitized by Google

during his earthly mission; what is meant by the Holy Spirit; and the real nature of the "Miraculous Conception." It shows that Jesus Christ is not God, and that the divinity which has been ascribed to him during the Christian era, according to the necessities of the period and the influence of the letter, is absolutely inadmissible. It shows that Jesus was not a man of flesh and blood like the men of our planet; and that this retrograde idea, contradictory alike to the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations, is likewise wholly inadmissible. It explains why it was necessary, for the progress of humanity and for the accomplishment of his earthly mission, that Jesus should have been presented by the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations under a double origin and nature, as both human and extra-human; although it was to be revealed by the New Revelation, when the time should have come, as extra-human only, and in accordance with the laws of nature.

The New Revelation shows Jesus to be an unfallen spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, the origin of whose perfection is lost in the depths of past eternities. It shows that he arose, like all creatures, according to the eternal laws of nature, and that he sprang from the same source, God, the Uncreated Creator, who creates, but not by division of his essence. It shows that Jesus arose, like all creatures, from the initial state of spirit-essence, by passing, according to the laws of nature established for its development and progress, through the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, to the state of formed spirit, or spirit invested with free-will and reason, possessing freedom of thought and action; but that, when he was required, like all other creatures, to choose his course, he remained constantly docile to the advice and instruction of his guides, and thus progressed from the original state of innocence, simplicity, and ignorance, remaining always pure in the path of progress, until he reached the culminating point of perfection, and became a pure spirit, without ever having fallen.*

* Compare what is said on the genealogy of Jesus, and the original phases and destiny of spirits, in the commentary on the three first Gospels, §§ 55, 56.

Digitized by Google

Having thus revealed the true origin and nature of Jesus, the New Revelation shows him to have been appointed by God as the Founder, Protector, and Ruler of our globe, and to be entrusted with the development and progress of our world and of all the creatures which inhabit it, in all the kingdoms of nature, as well as with the development and progress of the human race, which he is to guide to perfection.

The New Revelation makes known the mode of the appearance of Jesus upon the earth, the nature of his body, and the true meaning of the declaration of the Angel to Mary. It exhibits him as clothed with a body compatible with his own purity, and relatively in harmony with our sphere; a fluidic body, capable of persistent tangibility, and formed according to the laws of nature which govern worlds of high degree, adapted and applied to the fluids which surround our planet, and from which all the bodies of our world are formed. It shows that the term "Holy Spirit" means the hierarchy of the spirits of the Lord, who are the organs of his inspiration and the ministers and agents of his will; and it also explains why it was necessary that the illusory phenomena attending the "Miraculous Conception" should take place and be regarded as real.

The Divine Revelations to man being always successive and progressive, the new Revelation has its foundation, elements, and sanction, in the Hebrew and Angelic Revelations, and in the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles.

Inspired by the spirits of the Lord, who aided him in the accomplishment of his mission, the Apostle Paul proclaimed, as we have already pointed out, the indivisible unity of the Father, who is the only true God, and condemned the attribution of divinity to anything but the Father, either in heaven or on the earth.

After having thus proclaimed the only true God, condemned Polytheism, and condemned by anticipation the divinity ascribed to the Son and the Holy Spirit by the dogma

Digitized by Google

of the Three Persons (compare 1 Cor. viii. 4–6 : xi. 3), Paul proclaimed, under the veil of the letter, the superhuman origin and nature of Jesus, his position with reference to God and our planet, the extra-human nature of the body which he assumed for his earthly mission, and the simply apparent character of the circumstances attending his "birth" and supposed incarnation.

He proclaimed the origin and nature of Jesus as a created spirit, having started originally from the same point as all the other creatures of God, and sprung from the same principle, the Father. But he showed him to be a pure spirit, of perfect and immaculate purity. "He is pious, guileless, and undefiled; separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens" (Heb. vii. 26); "Made perfect in the age" (vii. 28); "The reflection of the glory" (of God) (i. 3). Paul also set forth the position of Jesus as the Founder, Protector, and Ruler of the earth, entrusted with the development and progress of men; and he alludes to the extra-human nature of the body assumed by Jesus, who was always a Pure Spirit clothed in a fluidic body, and was thus (by comparison of the finite with the infinite, the creature with the Uncreated Creator), the image and reflection, and substance of God, who is, in essence, intelligence, thought, and fluid, the substance of all existence; for the universal fluid flows from him, and is the means by which he effects all spiritual, fluidic, and material phenomena, and rules over everything which exists (Heb. i. 3; x. 5; 1 Cor. xv. 39, 40, 45, 47).

The human birth and parentage of Jesus Christ being simply apparent, Paul represents him as without father, mother, or genealogy, having neither beginning of existence nor end of life (Heb. ii. 20; vii. 1–3); and it has consequently been said that he regarded Jesus as a mysterious being, who appeared among men as the incarnation of the Deity to accomplish a great expiatory sacrifice. But he did not explain the mode by which this incarnation was effected, or the nature of the instruments employed for this purpose.

Digitized by Google

He left these questions in obscurity, because it was so intended, and because he himself was ignorant respecting them. Like the other Apostles, the Disciples, and the multitude, he regarded Jesus as a mysterious being, as Christians have continued to do to the present day. His true origin and position towards God and our planet, and the nature and mode of formation of his body, were mysteries which human reason could not penetrate, and which could only be explained by a New Revelation, when men should have become able to understand them.

The Apostle Paul, like the other Apostles, was inspired by spirits who aided and guided him in the paths which Jesus had marked out. Jesus had made statements which were intended to attract attention, and to be understood literally, at the time of their utterance and in succeeding ages; but he had also made other statements which were not designed to attract attention until they could be explained by the New Revelation, which should correct the erroneous opinions founded upon the literal interpretation of those statements.

The Apostle Paul, following the example of Jesus, also made statements which were designed to attract attention and to be understood literally, and other statements (under unconscious medianimic inspiration) of which he himself did not understand the exact meaning, and which were only intended to attract attention when they could be correctly explained by the New Revelation. Thus Paul represented Jesus Christ both as a man, sprung from the patriarchs according to the flesh, and mortal, dying on Calvary, and raised from the dead; and likewise as the Son of God, who came into the world with a body formed by God himself, without father, mother, or genealogy, whose days had neither beginning nor end, his birth and death being such only in appearance; God, who desired, neither sacrifice nor oblation, having formed for him a body which men could not destroy.

But why was it necessary that Jesus should be represented to men as possessed of both a human and a superhuman

Digitized by Google

nature? and what was the object of the revelations and missions which thus represented him?

These questions could only be answered by the knowledge of the real origin and nature of Jesus which is given to men by the New Revelation.

Jesus, a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, the Founder, Protector, and Ruler of the world, could not assume a body like that of the men of our planet, for such an assumption would be contrary to the immutable laws of nature.* Nevertheless it was necessary, for the accomplishment of his mission, that he should assume a body at once compatible with his own quality, and relatively in harmony with our sphere, and which should appear to be human to the eyes of men; a body which, although not of the same nature as the human body, should yet present the same form; so that men, regarding him as one of themselves, might be drawn towards him, and their hearts be reached by his teachings and example. His pure and stainless life, made up of charity and self-devotion, was intended to win their sympathy and admiration, so that they might love him and follow him, even while compelled by his superhuman actions to acknowledge him as a messenger of God, and his teachings also as coming from a divine source.

Hence the necessity for Jesus to be regarded, during his earthly mission, as a man of human origin, parentage, and genealogy.

But although the human nature and parentage of Jesus were realities in the eyes of men, as a necessary condition of the fulfilment of his earthly mission, they were, nevertheless, only apparent, since he could not assume a human body; and it was therefore needful that he should be regarded, after that mission had been completed, as of an extra-human origin and nature. He thus came to be looked upon, according to the traditions and necessities of the age, both as a man and as God, subjected to death, and raised from the dead by the return of the spirit to a corpse.

* For further explanations compare the commentary on the three first Gospels, §§ 67, 14, 31.

Digitized by Google

But although it was necessary that this opinion should be accepted as a reality for a time, yet this acceptance was to be only temporary, as a means of leading men onward in the path of light and truth.

Such an opinion could, in fact, only be transitory; for a miraculous conception would be contrary to the unvarying laws of nature which govern the earth. Consequently, that conception was merely apparent; and Jesus, as the Apostle Paul declares, had neither father, mother, nor genealogy—a declaration in strict conformity with the words of Jesus himself: "You are from the earth, but I am from heaven, and descended from heaven."

On the other hand, Jesus himself disclaimed the divinity which human interpretations falsely attributed to him, by declaring that there is no God but one, and that his Father is greater than himself; and the Apostle Paul, treading in the steps of his Master, emphatically declares the indivisible and exclusive divinity of the Father, in whom and from whom and to whom are all things.

Hence, as Jesus Christ was neither a man of our planet, nor a God possessing the divinity attributed to him by human interpretations, a New Revelation was needful to show men his true nature, and the meaning of the statements made by the letter of the former Revelations in regard to him.

In order to prepare men for what was thus to be revealed to them, the Hebrew, Angelic, and Apostolic Revelations, like the mission of Jesus, while adapted to the time in which they were made, contained, under the veil of the letter, the foundation and elements of the New Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, foretold by Christ as destined to be made when men, having passed through successive stages of development, should have become able to receive it.

If, examining the successive stages of intelligence and opinions among the Hebrews and other nations who received divine revelations, we follow the slow and laborious progress of the human mind in all the various departments of thought, first from the time of Moses to the appearance

Digitized by Google

of Christ, and next, until our own times, we shall bow with admiration and gratitude before the infinite wisdom of God, who has given to each era what it was able to bear; so that the human race, being guided by missionary spirits incarnated among them, and always superior to the masses, might advance gradually towards the truth in such a manner as to be progressively enlightened without being dazzled.

Thus men have always been led forward, first under the authority of the letter, with its mysteries and miracles; and next by the endeavour to free themselves from the bonds of the letter, through the action of reason and of freedom of thought, until at length, weary of their vain efforts to penetrate the mysteries and explain the miracles, they abandon themselves to doubt, incredulity, and negation. But the progress they have thus made has prepared them to receive the new light of the Spirit which giveth life, which offers them a simple and reasonable faith by explaining everything obscure in accordance with the laws of nature, now that blind faith, having borne its fruits according to the letter, has become insufficient. It is thus that God in his infinite wisdom prepared, through the missions of Moses and the Prophets among the Jews, and of missionary spirits incarnated among the Gentiles, for the advent of the Messiah, who, through his own higher work, and that of the Evangelists and Apostles, has gradually prepared the ground for the mission of the Spirit of Truth, which will lead men to the acquisition of eternal life; for that life consists, according to the declaration of Jesus himself, in knowing the Father, who is the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

That men in the past should take appearances for realities was both inevitable and useful under the veil of the letter. But the truth must now be revealed, for the ushering in of the new era, the era of the Christianity of Christ, through the New Revelation, which, by showing the natural causes of the events hitherto regarded as departures from the laws of nature, places the words pronounced by Jesus under the

Digitized by Google

veil of the letter, the actions and events of his earthly mission, and the objects and motives of the Hebraic and Apostolic dispensations, in luminous harmony with the progress and aspirations of the present day.

The explanation of the origin, nature, and authority of Jesus given by the New Revelation—showing him to have proceeded, like all the creatures of God, from the initial point of creation, to have passed without failure through all the stages of spirit-development, and thus to have attained, without sinning, the perfection of purity and wisdom that allowed of his appointment by God as the Founder, Protector, and Ruler of our globe, entrusted with the development and progress of the world, and of all its creatures in all the kingdoms of nature, as well as with that of our human race, which he is to lead to perfection—is in perfect accordance with the statement of Paul that he arose from the same principle as men, and therefore calls them brothers; that he is holy, innocent, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and perfect for ever; but that his Head is God the Father, whence all things draw their being, and who has made men for himself; the only God, than whom there is none other; the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, by whom all things were made, and through whom men are what they are. It is equally in accordance with the statements of Jesus, who called men his brothers, saying, "My God is your God," yet adding, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" As solemnly proclaimed by him, his Father is greater than he; but he is, relatively to the earth and its inhabitants, the only Teacher and Master, and the only Son of God, as being King over all in purity and wisdom, and invested with unlimited powers, all things having been put into his hands by his Father.

Jesus having voluntarily assumed a fluidic body for the accomplishment of his earthly mission, he is really, as Paul asserted, "without father, mother, or genealogy, and his days had neither beginning nor end;" the appearance of Jesus upon the earth being a spirit-manifestation, either tangible or intangible according to the needs of the moment, and

Digitized by Google

this fluidic body being one which could neither be the object of sacrifice nor oblation by mortal death, though constituting his life to human eyes; and it was this apparently human life, which he was able to lay down and take up again at pleasure, which enabled him to appear to men to die and to rise again, to cause his body to disappear from the tomb, while the stone which closed it was sealed; to reappear with the same body to the women and to the disciples; to disappear from the eyes of the two disciples whom he met on the road to Emmaus, while he was at table with them; and to appear in the midst of the Apostles while the door of the room in which they met was closed for fear of the Jews.

It was with this fluidic body that he rose into the ethereal regions at the time of his ascension, before the eyes of the assembled disciples; a body which he then finally laid aside, returning to his own order of being; for he only assumed it for the necessities of his earthly mission, and had the power to assume it or to lay it aside at will.

The New Revelation, by the light it gives us in regard to God, Christ, and the creation and origin of the soul, prepares us to understand the words of the Apostle Paul: "You are one body and one spirit, for you are all called to the same hope. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; and one God, the Father of all, who is above all, and extends his providence over all, and who is in you all." It thus prepares men for unity of belief, by leading them to recognise that there is only one true faith—viz., God, One and Indivisible, the Uncreated Creator, who creates, but not by division of his essence; the Father from whom all draw their being, and who has made us for himself: and Jesus Christ, a Spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, the Constructor and Ruler of the world, our only Lord, Teacher, and Master; by whom everything relating to our earth was made—not by any creative power on his part, for God alone creates, but as God's minister, having arranged its materials under direct divine inspiration, according to the immutable laws of nature which spring from the will of God. By him we are all that we are; not that he gave us our being, for life proceeds from God

Digitized by Google

alone; but through his guidance as the Director of the development and progress of spiritual essences and spirits, in accordance with natural law.

The spirits of the Lord who worked at the formation of our globe under the direction of Jesus, and who have since worked at its development and at the progress of all its creatures in all the kingdoms of nature, as well as at the progress and development of the human race, are what is meant by the term, collectively, "the Holy Spirit." They are our brothers, protectors, and guides, inspiring and assisting our physical, moral, and intellectual advancement. They are the organs of the Spirit of Truth, whether errant, or incarnated among men on a mission of light and truth. Humble, intelligent, active, and devoted missionaries, they raise themselves by aiding their brethren to advance.

The New Revelation teaches us that there is only one baptism—viz., the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire, which is granted by Jesus to all the sincere and well-meaning, whether they are aware of it or not, by giving them the aid and protection of spirit-helpers, who lead them to repentance and reparation of past wrong-doing, inspire them with the love of study, labour, and charity, and open to them paths of purification and progress by successive incarnations, which are at first expiatory and afterwards glorious, and thus aid their advance, through successive and progressive lives, towards sidereal perfection, the eternal life of fully purified spirits. When those who are now men shall have attained to this perfection, they will share in the purity and happiness of Jesus, and will approach, like him, the Fire of Omnipotence, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who dwells in inaccessible light, whom no man hath seen or can see; and they will then become the direct ministers of his will and of his providential designs for universal progress, life, and harmony in infinity and eternity: but they will always continue to grow in knowledge and in happiness, because no created spirit, however advanced he may be, can ever equal God, who alone has possessed absolute perfection from all eternity.

The book we now offer, under the direction of the Spirits

Digitized by Google

of the Lord, to the consideration of our fellow-men, will show them that, whatever may be their opinions or external forms of worship, there is but one way of salvation for all mankind—viz., charity, which implies and includes justice and kindness. It is the basis of faith and the source of hope; for, as the Apostle Paul has said, it is the end of all the commandments, and (as John the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth said to me through a medium on June 24, 1861), "If Faith and Hope are sisters, they are both the daughters of Charity." Charity must be practised in every form, material, moral, and intellectual—the unassuming, enlightened, active, disinterested and devoted charity, which is so well described by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. xiii.).

In conclusion, we repeat again the momentous words of Jesus, "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Yes; eternal life consists in knowing the Father, who is the only true God, the Uncreated Creator of all that exists in the spiritual, fluidic, and material orders; the source of all power, the sole principle of life, intelligence, light, truth and progress, in whom all things in infinity and eternity "live, and move, and have their being," of whom, by whom, and in whom are universal knowledge, justice, charity, life, progress, and harmony; and in knowing Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. In other words, in the recognition of the true aim and meaning of his earthly mission, by which he came to teach men how to live and how to die, for the advancement of their spirit, and to show them the path which they must follow by walking in his steps, in the light of the great Messianic Revelation, explained in spirit and in truth, which is destined to be, through its predictions and promises, the source of all light, truth, and advancement. Progressively explained and developed by the Spirit of Truth, it will lead our planet and its purified and transformed people to the second advent of Jesus, predicted and promised by him, when he will come, in all his spirit-glory, as the visible sovereign of the transformed and glorified earth, to display the unveiled truth to those whom

Digitized by Google

he will have brought to the threshold of sidereal perfection, and whom he will continue to lead onward for ever in the track of his shining footsteps. For when his pupils have become pure spirits, Jesus, our elder Brother, who had attained to perfection before he laid the foundation of our globe—Jesus will always be superior to them in wisdom and in power, and will be for ever their friend and guide, advancing before them in the acquisition of universal knowledge, which is as boundless and inexhaustible as God himself, the Source, Container, and End of all things, in Infinity and in Eternity.

J. B. ROUSTAING.

Digitized by Google

PART I.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW, MARK AND LUKE, COMMONLY CALLED THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS.

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you are spirit and life.—JOHN vi. 63.

The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.—2 CORINTH. iii. 6.

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 1–4.

The Gospels.

(1) Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, (2) Even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word; (3) It seemed good to me also, having paid careful attention to all these things from the beginning, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, (4) That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.

§ 1. The Evangelists, unconsciously to themselves, were inspired historical mediums, but were subject to the limitations of humanity, and each preserved his individual independence, notwithstanding the spiritual influence under which he wrote.

The intuition which aided them in their revelation was due to the divine inspiration communicated through superior spirits, but was received by the Evangelists according to their independent and fallible human nature. They thus recorded either what they had witnessed themselves or what they had heard from others, who, as Luke says, "had been eye-witnesses and ministers of the word from the beginning."

Man will not understand that, whatever the end to be

Digitized by Google

attained, it is needful to employ such human agencies as are available; and that as these agencies are themselves imperfect, it is vain to look for anything faultless in human works.

Each Evangelist wrote from his own point of view; and translators and interpreters have frequently mistaken the original meaning. Besides this, the words of the Apostles were preserved by oral tradition long before they were written down; and the discrepancies which exist are partly owing to this cause. If you always make allowance for the modifying influence which humanity exerts on medianimity, you will possess the secret of these comparatively unimportant variations. In certain cases, which we shall point out to you, the Evangelists were purposely left free to follow their own judgment with respect to such portions of the narrative as were based on popular report, and which were intended to be explained and understood at the time of the New Revelation.

The discrepancies between the various Gospels are strong evidence in favour of their authenticity; for if they had been falsified in any other way than by the errors of translators, nothing would have been easier than to make the whole four agree in all points. Although nothing human can be free from error, the variations in the Gospels are confined to unimportant details. They result from the narrators having preserved the independence of their natures, although aided by intuition; and they do not affect any essential portion of the Messianic Revelation. They do not affect the perfect and immaculate purity of the origin of the Christ (even though not actually divine, in the strict sense of the word*); his mission of love and devotion; his moral teaching, (which is not his doctrine, but the doctrine of Him who sent him); the eternal truths which he taught; his predictions and promises; the manner of his appearance and existence on the earth, which was purposely veiled by the letter of the Revelation, which the angel (or superior spirit) delivered to Mary and Joseph; his humble, pure and blameless life,

* Refer to §§ 55, 56 for explanations on the spiritual ancestry of Jesus, and on the origin of the soul.

Digitized by Google

whether viewed from a human or from a spiritual standpoint; the so-called "miracles" which he performed while living among men; his shameful "death," the disappearance of his body from the sepulchre, while the stone which closed it was sealed; his "resurrection;" his appearances to the women and his disciples; nor his final return to his true spiritual nature, at the time of his "ascension."

Thus the Gospel narratives are trustworthy, and each mutually completes and explains the others in its own way; and the four together form the entire record of the Messianic Revelation.

Do not pay much attention to mere verbal contradictions and slight differences of detail, which are of secondary importance, and have no bearing on the Master's work. Take a broader view of the task which is assigned to you. You are called upon to reveal the true spiritual meaning of hitherto unknown mysteries; to teach men "who is the Son;" and to prepare them to know "who is the Father." You are called upon to reveal the Truth to all men as it should be understood in its broad features, without lingering over unimportant details.

Time is fleeting, and your hours are numbered. Do not waste time in useless delays, but concentrate your attention on those important facts which may alter the beliefs of men, or which have been misrepresented by tradition; and do not trouble yourselves to criticize puerile details, which are only worthy of the attention of children and triflers.

The Gospel narratives consist of two very distinct portions, which must never be confounded. The first consists of the words spoken by the Master (his revelations), and of the actual record of his acts; but the second was designed to reflect and repeat the impressions, opinions and interpretations of the men of the Messianic age, respecting the nature and character of these revelations and events, and is therefore coloured by their prejudices and traditions.

To avoid repetition, you had better place the corresponding verses of the three first Gospels together, and we will give you one commentary upon them. The events related

Digitized by Google

in the Gospels are loosely strung together, and are not arranged in strictly chronological order. In the separate commentary on the Gospel of John, you may refer, when necessary, to the explanations previously given on corresponding passages in the three first Gospels. You must follow our directions, and arrange the passages under our control.

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 5–25.

Prediction of the Birth of John.

(5) There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth, (6) And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the ordinances and the commandments of the Lord blameless. (7) And they had no child, because Elisabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in age. (8) And it happened that while he was officiating as a priest before God, in the order of his course, (9) According to the custom of the priesthood, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord, (10) And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. (11) And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. (12) And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him, (13) And the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. (14) And he shall be to thee joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. (15) For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. (16) And he shall turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. (17) And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. (18) And Zacharias said to the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years. (10) And the angel answering, said to him, I am Gabriel who stand in the presence of God, and am sent to speak unto thee, and to announce this good news to thee. (20) And behold thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak until the day when these things shall come to pass, because thou didst not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their due season. (21) And the people waited for Zacharias, and wondered that he tarried so long in the temple. (22) And when he came out, he could not speak to them, and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. (23) And it came to pass that when he had completed the days of his ministration, he departed to his own house. (24) And after those days, his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, (25) Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

Digitized by Google

§ 2. The birth of John was intended to arrest public attention from the first.

Elisabeth remained childless until it became part of her mission to become the mother of John. Her barrenness does not mean that she had passed the age of child-bearing fixed by the laws of your planet, but merely that she had hitherto been childless, as is implied by the expression applied to Elisabeth by the angel in speaking to Mary (v. 36), "she who is *called* barren."

Every occurrence in human life springs from causes antecedent to your present existence, for any fault committed in a previous incarnation must be followed by its natural consequences. Man is born and dies many times before arriving at the state of perfection which allows him the full enjoyment of his spiritual faculties when he has attained to perfect love and charity, and the knowledge of God and his works. He will then perceive the unveiled truth in the physical world, whether material or fluidic, and in the spiritual world, whether moral or intellectual, having acquired the knowledge of all that lives, moves or exists in the immensity of Creation. When the spirit has attained to the culminating point of sidereal perfection, the vastness of Creation still expands eternally before him, to be explored for ever in the pursuit of universal science.

Each succeeding existence is linked to those which have preceded it, and it frequently happens that spirits who have not been guilty of great crimes, accept missions on your earth, and, at the same time, accept also a chain of events which must be accomplished, but which cause them much suffering in their incarnate state.

Thus Elisabeth, being one of those spirits who desired to take part with Jesus in his work of regeneration, had accepted the lot of a *barren* woman (which was a reproach among the Jews) in order to render the birth of John more remarkable; and Zacharias had likewise consented to live childless.

Although they had forgotten these obligations when incarnated, they had nevertheless undertaken them, and were bound by their consequences.

Digitized by Google

Do not imagine that each individual plant, or organized being has an attendant spirit specially appointed to watch over its reproduction. Spiritual agency exists indeed, but it operates in a general manner. The fluids surrounding you are distributed according to the needs of the plant rooted in the soil, or the man seeking to raise himself towards heaven; and the birth of each new being takes place only at its appointed period. If the pollen falls on a flower at a period unsuitable for fructification, it remains sterile; and so in other cases.

In the case of plants and animals, reproduction takes place at definite periods regulated by general laws. In the case of man, however, you have been taught that the spirit itself chooses the experiences of its future life. It does not construct its own body, but before being incarnated, it asks for a body suited to the experiences which it is about to undergo. It is consequently the will of the spirit which attracts or rejects the needful elements, prepared by the spirits entrusted with the formation of material bodies generally, who combine and condense the animal substances into bodies, and thus play their part, according to general laws, in the actions of incarnate spirits, in order that these bodies should be suited to the kind of experiences selected by those who are about to be incarnated amid the varying circumstances of human life.

When the spirit is about to continue its experiences, it asks either for material fecundity, or persistent sterility throughout its existence, or for temporary sterility or fecundity, at periods determined by the character of its desired experiences. Hence the spirit attracts or repels the principles needful for the character of its experiences from the very first; and, consequently, undesired births may take place, or persons may remain childless in spite of the wishes of the incarnate spirit. In such cases, spirit influence only exists in the sense that the results spring from the desire of the spirit at the time when it selected its experiences. As soon as the body is fitted for the experiences which await the spirit who is about to inhabit it, the guardian spirits

Digitized by Google

limit their action to a general supervision, and allow each experience to run its course in the order of events, for the fluids have now received their determinate direction.

When a spirit who has chosen to experience temporary sterility, accepts its body, it repels the principles requisite for fecundity for a given time, after which it attracts them, (according to the nature of the experiences which it has chosen) under the supervision of the guardian spirits. Thus, Zacharias, the husband of Elisabeth, had often prayed to God to take away the reproach from his house, and to give him a male child. But Elisabeth had asked for temporary barrenness, as part of her mission; and consequently she remained childless until the time appointed.

Humanly speaking, the prayer of Zacharias was answered; and from a spiritual point of view, the trial of sterility had ceased; for John was born.

Zacharias was, unknown to himself, a seeing and hearing medium, which explains his seeing and conversing with the spirit.

He was condemned to silence, not because he doubted the truth of what he had heard, but in order that this temporary infirmity might serve to corroborate the reality of the prediction.

He who reserves his opinion on what is unknown to him, is wise.

We must call your special attention to the words of the angel concerning Elisabeth. They were afterwards repeated and confirmed by public opinion. In truth, Elijah was John, and John had been Elijah.

When highly exalted spirits desire to elevate mankind, they often assume a form which appears mean in the eyes of men in regard to social conditions; and their devotion can manifest itself in all situations. The great spirits of the Lord manifest themselves either by incarnations or apparitions according to their degree of elevation, and their spiritual nature. Such manifestations are rare; but there are certain periods when they are necessary, both on your planet and on others. There are many

Digitized by Google

planets higher than yours, where more advanced spirits still require to have their aspirations after the good and the beautiful rekindled when they grow feeble.

In future, you may recognize the rank of such a spirit by his conduct as a man. His life will be spotless, and the love of God and the neighbour will regulate all his actions, and govern all his thoughts. His childhood will be gentle, exhibiting none of those evil tendencies which usually appear in children.

His youth will be laborious, and all material instincts will be subjugated by the love of work and progress. His manhood will be blameless, unsoiled by any abuse or excess; and his old age will be worthy of all veneration as the reflection of a life that has been blameless in the sight of Heaven.

He will be indulgent towards all weaknesses, will lend his aid and support to all human deficiencies, and will wait patiently for the hour of his deliverance.

By these signs, O beloved friends, you may perceive that a superior spirit has descended among you, to give a fresh impetus to human progress.

§ 3. It has been authoritatively asserted that human science can terminate sterility by an appropriate regimen.

Do not some patients die notwithstanding medical aid, while others recover? Why is this? Because one has reached his appointed term, while the other has not yet finished his career.

Has not the treatment which, humanly speaking, has proved successful in one case of sterility failed in another? Why so? Because the sterility of one patient has reached its term, while that of the other is destined to continue either through life, or till it is removed by change of conditions and circumstances.

Do not suppose that there is any fatalism or predestination in these cases; but attribute them entirely to the choice and duration of experiences. Birth and death are alike regulated by the immutable laws of nature according to

Digitized by Google

universal harmony. The moment of death is only inevitable when man has reached the limit which these laws have fixed as the irrevocable end of human life, beyond which man's free will is powerless to extend it; but this free will can arrest the course of life at some definite period between birth and this natural limit, which, in fact, is but seldom attained. Life is generally terminated sooner, either on account of the resolutions made by the spirit before incarnation respecting the selection, duration, and termination of experiences, and the length of life, or by the use and abuse which men make of their earthly existence. Within these limits it is thus left to your free will to close your life at a definite period, conformably with the laws of nature, either by the choice of experiences in the spiritual state before incarnation, or by your actions during your earthly existence.

Thus, when a man dies, notwithstanding medical treatment, he dies either because his time has come, or because he has reached the natural period of human life, or because he has reached the limit to which his use of his free will has restricted him. In the first case, he dies conformably with the determination of his spirit before incarnation; in the second, his life has reached the longest term allowed by the good use which he has made of his earthly existence; and in the third, he has either made a bad use of his life or has neglected the precautions needful to enable his body to last till the end of his experiences.*

In the case of birth, nothing is inevitable except the times and conditions fixed for its occurrence by the natural laws of your planet. But the free will of man or woman may form a temporary or permanent obstacle to birth, by the resolutions of the spirit before incarnation. They may then either avoid the operation of the laws entirely, when they have chosen to experience permanent sterility during life; or for a time only, conformably to the previous

* What is said above respecting the moment of death is fully explained in the section on the Fifth Commandment of the Decalogue, and should be read in connection with it.

Digitized by Google

determinations of the spirit, and to favourable circumstances.

Thus, when a barren woman has become a mother, (humanly speaking) in consequence of medical treatment, it is because she had resolved, before incarnation, that her sterility should be only temporary; and it has terminated as arranged beforehand.

But the treatment fails in other instances, when a woman has resolved before incarnation that her sterility should be permanent, or when the time and circumstances fixed for its cessation have not yet arrived.

Your science cannot effect anything in your material life which is contrary to the laws of nature and incarnation, or to the selection and duration of experiences. If a spirit has chosen to experience permanent sterility nothing can terminate it. But if it has resolved either to remain barren or become fertile, according to circumstances, or to its own deserts, its human future may become modified. For example, a spirit may have neglected its duties as the father or mother of a family, and have firmly resolved to repair the wrong which it has done. But it is unwilling to take the responsibility upon itself without being certain of possessing the needful perseverance; or else it has desired to be condemned to wait for a time, that the birth of the long-desired child may make it still more precious. In such a case, it will depend on the resolution and progress of the spirit itself, whether it will become a parent; and it is then enabled to adopt means which may effect the accomplishment of its desires.

It is only in such a case as this, that science may assist the spirit to gain its end, when its acts or surrounding circumstances (acting independently of its external wishes, but conformably with its spirit-resolutions) combine to terminate its barrenness, by aiding in the development of the material conditions necessary to fruitfulness. And although sterility would then cease without the aid of science the study of these conditions is nevertheless useful.

Do not imagine that the researches of science are value-

Digitized by Google

less; for science is one of the agents employed to further the designs of Providence. The researches of science will result in man's discovery of facts previously regarded as secrets or mysteries of nature; and thus those who have chosen various experiences enable it in the course of time and progress to confirm the results and conquests to which it has attained.

You are now prepared to understand that the mystery of generation will one day be understood; but only by experimental study and perseverance. If you would make these researches easy, encourage those who desire to mitigate the sufferings of the incarnate spirits, whose mission it is to furnish opportunities for these studies, and thus will unhoped-for successes encourage those who are engaged in these profound researches. In the course of the purification of your planet and its humanity, man will finally succeed in acquiring a knowledge of the fluidic combinations which compose matter. He will be able to materialize the fluids like a new Prometheus, but, being more prudent and submissive, will not attempt to animate them, leaving to the Creator the task of vivifying them. Do not misunderstand us; we do not tell you that man will be able to manipulate the fluids at will, so as to condense them, and construct material bodies like yours, as the potter moulds the clay into an image of himself; but that he will be enabled to comprehend, regulate, and attract to himself the fluids and await the result in the formation of bodies. This is the case in higher planets than yours, where the needful fluids are drawn together only by a double and uniform thought; and this will take place in your planet also when it has reached the same degree of elevation.

§ 4. What is the exact import of the words dictated respecting the doubt felt by Zacharias: "He is a wise man who reserves his judgment about what is unknown?"

It is prudent not to adopt every new idea blindly, or to accept all maxims as good which are preached to you with more or less eloquence. It is needful to examine every new idea carefully, not with the bodily eyes, but with those of

Digitized by Google

the mind; and to comprehend, not with the ears of the body, but with those of the spirit. Man should reason and study, and take everything into consideration; and we therefore thought it needful to explain that Zacharias was not struck dumb because he doubted. He merely requested a proof that the vision was not a delusion, or hallucination of his own mind; and he consequently received a proof, and not a chastisement. Could God hold a man criminally responsible for his ignorance?

§ 5. How must we understand the words of Zacharias: (v. 18) "How shall I know the truth of what you tell me, for my wife and I are old," in connection with the angel's reply (vv. 19 and 20), "Because you did not believe in my words, which shall be fulfilled in due season?"

Zacharias simply asked for a proof, without either doubting or denying; but his asking for a proof implied that he did not believe that the event would really happen, solely on the authority of the announcement.

§ 6. How are we to understand that the angel's words respecting John were subsequently repeated and confirmed by public opinion?

The Jews generally considered that John was Elijah who had returned among them; and it was on this account that John was questioned on the subject in the course of his mission, and that Jesus repeated the words of the Pharisees to his disciples.

Are we to understand v. 17 to imply that the spirit of Elijah was about to be reincarnated in the child of Elisabeth and Zacharias?

Most certainly.

Was it not intended that this hidden sense should only be fully explained at a later period as involving the principle and consequences of the law of reincarnation?

Yes; but this hidden meaning was contained in it from the first.

§ 7. How are we to understand that the form assumed by exalted spirits, who desire to aid humanity, often appears mean to men, according to human prejudices?

You have only to consider the position of Jesus in the eyes of the world. What was his social position; and what

Digitized by Google

was that of his faithful and zealous disciples and apostles? O men, do you not still find examples of touching devotion among those whom you regard as belonging to the most degraded classes? And do you not sometimes find among them a nobility of soul which your pride would desire to behold only among those whom you call the higher classes, whereas, (shame upon them!) it is generally among these that you find the least.

§ 8. What is meant by the words, "He will drink neither wine nor strong drink"?

Men devoted to the service of God were restricted to a certain course of life, among which was the obligation of abstaining from spirituous or fermented beverages. The Hebrews frequently dedicated a firstborn child to the Lord, especially when they had long desired one; just as many mothers among yourselves dedicate their children to the Virgin.

Please explain v. 15: "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb."

Spirit-teachings have already informed you that when the spirit is about to incarnate itself anew, to pass through fresh experiences, it suffers greatly from anxiety as to the result, and these sufferings increase till the moment of birth, and continue, though gradually decreasing, during the first period of material infancy.

After a spirit has expiated its faults, by appropriate moral sufferings in the errant state, it is necessary for it to repair the past. It chooses the experiences which it thinks most fitting for its advancement; but these experiences always appear terrible to it; and it feels its weakness in the past so acutely that it mistrusts its strength in the future. Then begins the trouble and anxiety of which we spoke. It is definite at first, but afterwards increases in intensity, and lessens in clearness in proportion as the material body in course of formation drags the spirit nearer and nearer to its prison, with which it is connected by a fluidic link, which binds it from the moment of conception. As soon as it is

Digitized by Google

born, the spirit is completely linked to the body, and is no longer able to separate from it. It then commences its experiences, and undergoes the sufferings designed to alter its character. It no longer feels the anxiety of the first moments, in consequence of its senses being deadened by matter until this matter has become sufficiently developed to allow the spirit gradually to regain a *relative* liberty.

Do you suppose that it can be the same in the case of a purified spirit who assumes this fleshy covering only as one might assume a uniform to enable him to serve his couutry better?

In such a case the spirit endures the trammels of the flesh with joy; and as long as the links between the body and the spirit are not tightened, he is free to survey the greatness of the work committed to his charge, and the confidence which his Master has shown in him, and his joy is great! He is not entirely subjected to the yoke of the flesh from the earliest period, but preserves a certain amount of independence. He suffers no preliminary anxiety; but only from the torpor occasioned by matter at the moment of birth, when the body contracts the spirit, until it gradually becomes sufficiently developed to allow the spirit to recover a relative amount of liberty. John was "filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb;" that is, being a very elevated spirit, he attracted his equals and superiors around him.

§ 9. What is meant by the Holy Spirit?

During the Hebrew period and at the time of the earthly mission of Jesus, it was a familiar expression, and implied both the manifestation of God himself by any act, and the divine inspiration, the "breath" of God Himself.

When they wished to express that a man was inspired by God, they said "he was filled with the Holy Spirit;" or "the Holy Spirit was in him;" or "he was driven by the Spirit;" or "he was moved by the Spirit of God."

This expression was also used in speaking of Jesus, in accordance with the ideas of the time and people. They took him for a man like themselves, and were ignorant of

Digitized by Google

his nature and origin; and they were consequently unable to understand how he could be so superior to all human weakness, without being "filled with the Holy Spirit," or inspired by God, like the prophets.

In times subsequent to the mission of Jesus, and according to the Catholic Church, the Holy Spirit was regarded as an individual part of God himself. They considered God to be the Supreme Intelligence, ruling over mankind. One fraction had assumed the human form, and had descended visibly among men; another fraction was the intelligence and divine inspiration which was communicated to men, and inspired them; and which required to assume a material form to become visible to their eyes.

These false interpretations were based upon a mixture of Hebrew and Pagan notions, which were partially theistic, combined with a confused recollection of Spiritist ideas of which some traces had been preserved by tradition, and interpreted by the imagination of men according to their necessities.

From the Spiritist standpoint, and according to the true teaching laid open to all by the New Revelation, the Holy Spirit was not, and is not, an individual spirit; but is a figurative expression representing the totality of pure, superior, and good spirits.

This sacred phalanx is the instrument and minister of God, and is one and indivisible in the hierarchy of moral and intellectual elevation. It is eternal and infinite, and sheds its light everywhere, without ever being divided. The pure spirits alone receive inspiration and direction immediately from God, which they transmit to the superior spirits, through whom it descends to the good spirits, according to the degrees of the spiritual scale; and lastly to you.

This holy company executes and superintends the inspiration and will of God in the physical, intellectual and moral universe, according to immutable and eternal laws. It watches over organization, the functions and fulfilment of life, and the universal harmony and progress in space of the more or less material or fluidic worlds, throughout the

Digitized by Google

whole universe. It watches over all spirits who are gifted with free will, whether they are errant, incarnated, or otherwise incorporated, as well as over all other beings, in all the kingdoms of nature.

This sacred phalanx is the true providence of God, who is the Father of all which exists; and it manifests his justice, goodness, and infinite mercy throughout the spiritual worlds in space, and in all the planets according to their various degrees of moral and intellectual elevation. Thus, such expressions as "filled with the Holy Spirit," imply to be aided, inspired, or guided by the Spirits of the Lord whom every incarnate spirit attracts to himself according to the degree of his moral and intellectual elevation, and the nature and importance of the mission or the work which he has to accomplish.

Jesus was a perfect spirit, and pure among the purest of those who work under his guidance to forward the destiny, development, and progress of your planet and its humanity, and direct their course. The origin of his purity and perfection rests in the obscurity of past eternities; but he is the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet, and your Master and ours. He did not act under any external influence, but by the power of his own will; but it might be said that he was "driven by the Spirit," in the sense that his elevation and purity enabled him to approach the Source of Omnipotence, and thus to receive direct divine inspirations.

§ 10. Did the angel appear to Zacharias (v. 11) in a human form, as the Hebrews represented?

Yes; the Hebrews pictured the angels to themselves as clothed in white, and illuminated by rays flowing from an invisible source. They sometimes added wings, to teach the people that they could traverse space.

The apparitions which have appeared at different ages and at different times, have always obeyed the same law, by the spirit assuming that form which was best fitted to arrest the attention of the seer, or to remind him of what he desired to present to his sight.

Digitized by Google

§ 11. What is the meaning of the words (v. 11) "I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God."

These words do not imply that the spirit was always in the presence of God, like a human minister who awaits the orders of a king. He was one of those exalted spirits who are the messengers of God, and consequently in constant communion with him. The divine inspiration flowed to the spirit as that of your guardian angel flows to you, allowing for the difference of spiritual natures and relationships.

§ 12. How did Zacharias become dumb?

By fluidic action directed by the will of the angel. There is a spiritual magnetism resembling human magnetism; and thus the tongue of Zacharias was weighed down with fluids which caused a kind of temporary paralysis, just as the magnetiser acts upon the limb of a subject when he wishes to render it immovable. Magnetism, which you still understand very imperfectly, is a property of our nature; and your fluids act more or less powerfully according as they are more or less impeded or altered by the action of the flesh.

In the spirit, the fluids act freely, and you are more or less susceptible to our influence according to your degree of materiality, just as the subject is more or less impressionable, or clairvoyant under the influence of his magnetizer. This explanation is sufficient to explain the nature of all reputed "miracles;" and it is for you to apply it in special cases.

§ 13. Why did Elisabeth hide herself for five months (v. 25) when the reproach of her barrenness, according to Hebrew prejudices, had been removed?

As an act of humility, and thus to prolong the reproach which rested on her by her own free will.

Digitized by Google

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 26-38.

The Annunciation.

(26) And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, (27) To a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. (28) And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, O highly favoured one, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. (29) And when she saw him, she was confounded at his speech, and considered what manner of salutation this should be. (30) And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. (31) And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. (32) He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: (33) And he shall reign over the house of Jacob through the ages, and there shall be no end of his kingdom. (34) And Mary said to the angel, How shall this be, since I know not a man? (35) And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall rest upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also the holy thing which shall be born shall be called the Son of God. (36) And behold thy kinswoman Elisabeth hath also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren, (37) For no decree shall be impossible with God. (38) And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

§ 14. During the time that man has dwelt on earth, he has not always been qualified to comprehend the same language; and what he was fitted to receive, has been given to him during each passing age. Must not man be prepared for the reception of truth, and must not every age be addressed in language which is fitted to its needs, and which can be listened to and understood?

Men, do not forget that you were as little children when Jesus descended among you to show you the right way, and to lay the foundations of your regeneration; and you are not much farther advanced now. Therefore, bow down reverently before the infinite wisdom which overrules and directs your progress, through Christ, your Master, who is the protector and ruler of your planet and its humanity. You will gradually receive light and truth, and be led towards perfection from age to age.

The advent of Jesus was announced to Mary, and afterwards to Joseph, as effected by the operation of the Holy

Digitized by Google

Spirit, and as the act of God himself, because the Jews regarded the Holy Spirit as the divine intelligence manifesting itself by some action. But the manner of the birth of Jesus was intended to remain a secret during the whole period of his earthly mission.

Mary confided this revelation to those disciples of Jesus who had followed him most faithfully, and whose virtue was most assured. They were faithful to the inspirations of their guides, and perceived that such a revelation would lead men to question the purity of Mary, and the origin of her son. They did not venture to impart it to the multitude till after the earthly mission of Jesus was accomplished. The belief in the divinity of Jesus was only accepted after his return to spirit-life at the time of his "ascension." His faithful disciples then understood his words relating to God "his father" literally, and thought that his origin and stainless life formed the only explanation of the surprising events called "miracles," which continually forced themselves upon their attention.

It was intended that men should regard Jesus, during his earthly mission, as the son of Joseph and Mary, and a man like themselves. The disciples and the multitude regarded him as a prophet, clothed with material humanity, like the ancient Prophets under the Law. The chief priests, the scribes, the Pharisees and their followers considered that he was an impostor, because they thought that in calling himself the Son of God, he arrogated divinity to himself, and asserted himself to be God.

It was therefore intended that all should regard Mary as the mother of Jesus; both when he was considered to be a man like yourselves, and subsequently, when he was considered to be God incarnate, born of a virgin by the operation of the Holy Spirit. It was therefore necessary first to materialize all the facts to render them accessible to matter; and afterwards, when the earthly mission of Jesus was finished, to idealize matter by ascribing a divine origin to him, that men should accept his mission, and submit to his laws, on account of his supposed divinity.

Digitized by Google

Man is proud; and men would not have been satisfied if a spirit of the Lord had descended to redeem them. They required a God; and those who shed the blood of bulls and lambs needed a sacrifice of flesh and blood. They could not have comprehended the boundless devotion of the radiant spirit who descended among you to set you an example of the life which you should lead in preparation for eternity. Nor would they have realized or been moved by the sufferings of Jesus, if they had not been represented as physical.

You must remember that the Jews were in direct contact with the Romans. The ideas and customs of the conquerors always more or less permeate those of the conquered nation; and in this instance, polytheistic ideas existed side by side with monotheism. The life and actions of Jesus during his earthly mission; his "death" and "resurrection," the events which followed, combined with the interpretations which men put upon his sayings, had already created a profound impression. After his mission was accomplished, his disciples divulged what the angel, or spirit, had announced to Mary and Joseph respecting the "miraculous" birth of Jesus, of a virgin, through the influence of the Holy Spirit.

As these events were all considered to be "supernatural," "miraculous," or "divine," the Jews felt the necessity of multiplying their divinity, and yet attempting to combine unity with plurality; and this gave rise to the human dogma of the Three Persons.

At that time, as at present, materialism crushed the world under a leaden weight which would ultimately have destroyed it. It consequently became necessary to awaken the spirit, and give it strength to struggle with matter. For this, the world required an immaterial example (immaterial, that is, with respect to the divinity which was ascribed to it), for its materiality in the eyes of men only existed for a limited time, and as a necessary means of communication.

The "miracle," humanly speaking, consists in the entrance of this example into your world; for it appears to men like a violation of natural law. But there was no "miracle;" for

Digitized by Google

the will of God is immutable, and He never alters the natural laws which He has established from all eternity.

We will now explain this as far as your limited human intelligence is able to receive it. The "birth" was effected by the appropriation of the laws which govern the superior worlds to the fluids of your planet.

Mary was a superior and very pure spirit, who had accepted a sacred mission on your earth to aid in preparing for the regeneration of its inhabitants. She was spiritually in communion with the spirits of the Lord; but was subject like yourselves to the law of material human incarnation. She was also a seeing and hearing medium, for she saw the angel, and heard his prediction. Her intelligence was dimmed by her material body, which prevented her from recollecting her mission; and this will sufficiently explain why she questioned the angel respecting the possibility of his prediction being fulfilled; for neither Mary nor any other person were intended to understand the spiritual origin of her son.

According to the traditions of the Jews, and the interpretations which they put upon the Old Testament, they believed that God himself communicated directly with men, and that the Holy Spirit was the intelligence of God manifested by some action. Hence the angel replied to Mary and then to Joseph that this birth was caused by the operation of the Holy Spirit; an answer which was appropriate to the intelligence and necessities of the age. It was therefore understood in connection with the events which were about to take place, and prepared men for the teachings of a new and later revelation when they were fitted to receive them.

At that period men awaited a temporal chieftain who should revive the glory of their nation, and restore their national freedom and independence. They required a chief who should depart so far from the human programme that they should understand that his kingdom was not of this world; and they needed a sacrifice to offer to that terrible God whom they supposed to take pleasure in holocausts. In order that this sacrifice should be great enough for those who

Digitized by Google

were not allowed to sacrifice men to their God, they sacrificed himself to himself.* The importance of man was enhanced, and his duty towards God appeared greater when, having taken Jesus during his earthly mission for a man like the ancient prophets, they supposed him afterwards to be God Himself, in consequence of his "death," "resurrection," and "miracles;" and the publication of the revelation which the angel had made to Mary and Joseph.

It would have been dangerous to reveal the secrets of the other world to these men. They had not strength enough to keep them from danger in communicating with the invisible world, or to receive and sustain the revelation of the principles and consequences of the natural law of Reincarnation. They had trembled so long under the iron rod of Moses that the paternal God, who was always ready to pardon, would have appeared so lenient that they would have made no effort to improve themselves. A Spiritual Redeemer would have made no appeal to their senses; they were so material that they required matter, although it was an ideal matter, which might gradually prepare them for a spiritual life, and lead them to it by easy gradations. Time is older now by nearly twenty centuries, during which successive reincarnations have led to expiation, reparation, and progress, and have prepared you to understand the spiritual life, to which you are now to be gradually conducted. The letter is needful for matter, but the spirit is necessary for the intellect.

It is now time to reveal the spiritual origin of Jesus. The

* I may, perhaps, be allowed to quote here, an obscure passage from Thorpe's translation of the Icelandic Edda containing the same expression:

"I know that I hung,
On a wind-rocked tree,
Nine whole nights,
With a spear wounded,
And to Odin offered,
Myself to myself,
On that tree
Of which no one knows
From what root it springs."

The High One's Lay, v. 140 (Transl.).

Digitized by Google

letter has borne its fruits, and now it killeth, and must be replaced by the spirit which giveth life.

The appearance of Jesus among men was not an event contrary to the laws of nature. The way is open for you to investigate these laws with the humility due from a creature to its Creator; advance, and we will aid you.

You are aware that there are inferior and superior worlds; material and fluidic worlds.

The spirit raises itself above material instincts in proportion to its purity; but it abandons itself to its animal propensities according to its nearness to the primitive incarnations. It is the same with all the necessities of material existence, which change and even disappear in proportion to the increasing purity of the spirit.

The needs of the flesh, and consequently the laws of reproduction become modified and purified in proportion to the purity of the worlds. The contact of matter to produce matter is one of the conditions connected with your inferiority, and only exists in the material worlds, to which yours still belongs.

In the higher fluidic worlds, the law of reproduction is based upon the will, which draws the appropriate principles to the family where the will-power is exerted, by a kind of magnetic attraction.

The spirit appears on such a planet by fluidic incarnation, or rather by incorporation. When it reaches the planet it finds the elements needful for its incorporation, and incorporates itself by this means in the family appointed to train it. The will and desire of the parents attract it; the elements necessary for incorporation attach themselves to the perisprit, combine with it, and form a body suited to the planet, but which may be relatively compared with yours.

The ties between parents and children in such worlds are stronger than with you, being understood by all to their fullest extent, and are not liable to be weakened or sundered.

In such worlds there is neither male nor female in the sense in which you understand these expressions on your earth. The instincts are subject to some variations, but as

Digitized by Google

they have no relation to your material senses, it would be both difficult and useless to endeavour to explain what you could not comprehend. We will only say that difference of sex exists from a moral or fluidic standpoint. This difference is owing to that which exists in the nature and properties of fluids, and in their action in the state of incarnation or incorporation. That which is moral is always connected with that which is physical in all spheres; and the fluids serve to express the feelings and properties of the spirit. Have you not an illustration of this, although a material one, among yourselves? Is not the incarnate spirit subject to the influence of matter, which is nothing but thickened and solidified fluid, as the ice on your rivers is a concentration of the light vapour which evaporates in the rays of the sun? In these high worlds, Love (a word which is so profaned among you) attains a high development, but always under purified conditions.

The mirror of the spirit's past unfolds before its memory in proportion to its increasing purity. A pure spirit is one who has attained to sidereal perfection, and is consequently not subject to any incarnation on any planet whatever. Such a spirit alone has perfect knowledge to control all the fluids. He also preserves complete liberty and independence, and is fully acquainted with his origin, whatever may be the perisprit or fluidic body which he assumes and adapts to the regions which he traverses. When he visits a planet, he assumes a perisprit adapted to it, which he can take up, lay aside, or reassume by maintaining its constituent principles always ready to disperse or to reunite, according to the circumstances and requirements of his high mission.

Remember what Jesus said respecting the body which he had assumed, and which constituted his life in the eyes of men: "I lay down my life to reassume it; no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord; I have power to quit it, and I have power to reassume it" (John x. v. 18).

Jesus could have constructed the perisprit or tangible fluidic body which he assumed when he appeared in your world under the aspect of an infant, by simply exerting his

Digitized by Google

will, and attracting round him the necessary fluids; but Mary, before her incarnation, and purely from love and devotion, had asked to participate in his work by forming his perisprit through the influence of her own. Her co-operation was accepted, but she had forgotten it herself, for the conditions of human incarnation did not permit her to remember it. At the appointed period, her ardent desire to fulfil the divine mission which had been revealed to her by the angel, led to an emanation of her perispritic fluids. This sympathetic radiation attracted the requisite fluids, but the unconscious action of Mary would have been of no avail, had it not been aided by the will of him who was about to descend among you. It was the will of Jesus himself which constructed the tangible perisprit which became a body adapted to your planet, and relatively similar to your own. This was almost material; for Jesus constructed it of the surrounding fluids of which your own bodies are formed.

Do not forget that the spirit adapts its perisprit to the regions which it visits, and that your earth is one of the inferior worlds; consequently, the tangible elements would unite so much the more easily in proportion to the greater power of the spirit.

Human science laughs at everything which it cannot understand; but we assure you that the human perisprit, especially in its tangible condition, is semi-material. Has science discovered any means by which it can compare the fluids which surround you with those of other planets? Has any scientific man succeeded in descending to the inferior planets, and felt the air which surrounds them suffocating him with its weight, blinding his eyes by its density, and looking like a dense fog resting upon everything around? Has he ascended to the higher regions, and felt the dizziness which the rarity of the air would cause him? Has he felt his sight expanded by the aid of superincumbent layers of air, and able to pierce to distances which he could not calculate, and to perceive objects on a scale which your telescopes could never unfold to him? What is the cause of such differences? Simply that the layers of fluids are

Digitized by Google

appropriate to your requirements. You say you know this, but you do not comprehend the causes, nor seek to understand the effects. The human perisprit, which is tangible, is semi-material in comparison with you, just as steam is semi-liquid, and smoke is semi-ethereal.

As compared with your natures, the body of the inhabitants of the superior worlds resembles the human perisprit of your planet. It is a fluidic body, but if you were able to see it, it would appear material to you.

The perispritic body of Jesus was incomparably more material than that of a superior spirit, but there was a still greater difference between his body and yours. In some respects it greatly resembled the body of man in the superior worlds, being composed of the same elements, but it was modified and solidified by means of the human or animalized fluids which were needed to make it visible and tangible to you, in accordance with the will of Jesus, and the necessities of his earthly mission. It thus presented all the outward appearance of a human body.

Let not man deny the possibility of these facts, because he cannot yet understand and explain what is beyond the material laws of his nature.

We will not say, like those who explain everything which they cannot understand, by one invariable formula, "Everything is possible with God;" but we say: What man ignorantly regards as a deviation from immutable law, is not even a derangement of the laws of the universe, but an application of them. When man has overcome the difficulties which prevent his raising himself in space; when he has succeeded in analyzing the superincumbent layers of air at the elevations to which he will one day attain; and when he understands the properties and effects of fluids, he will find that what is now mocked and ridiculed will become an established fact, which will be analyzed by science. Scientific men will then wonder that these mighty agencies have not always been subject to their control, just as they wonder now that electricity has not always been in use; although, while they admit its visible effects, they have not yet dis-

Digitized by Google

covered its causes; for the labour of each day is sufficient for itself.

Supposed deviations from the immutable laws of nature are not even derangements, but rather applications of these laws. You must not believe that it is impossible to produce effects on your planet similar to those which occur in the superior planets, but these effects, though originating in the same principles, are nevertheless modified as regards the sphere in which they take place.

It is true that fluidic incarnations, identical with those which occur in Jupiter, and in many other superior worlds of greater or less elevation, would be a derangement of established laws which nothing ever modifies; but a similar kind of incarnation, modified by the use of your fluids, would be a connecting link between two degrees of the scale. It would be an adaptation of law, and not a derangement.

We enter into these particulars to remove all lurking doubts respecting the possibility of what we assert. We do not blame the incredulity which such new ideas are likely to inspire in man, but we wish to reassure those whom our words might unsettle.

It follows that there was a modification of law. The fluids suited to incarnation or incorporation in the superior worlds, but invisible to you, were materialized, and rendered opaque to human sight by the addition of fluids adapted to the construction of your bodies, and thus the superior fluids were adapted to the inferior planet on which you dwell.

What is there that you can object to in this idea, when you admit the phenomena of temporary tangibility which have occurred at all periods of your planet, and have presented every appearance of the physical human body to your eyes, and, in some rare cases, have simulated human life and speech?

When this fluidic combination can sometimes be effected by spirits of your own order, is it so incredible that it might be effected to a much greater extent by the powerful will of a superior spirit?

Digitized by Google

Is the lapse of time which you find it so difficult to measure perceptible to us, and do we reckon myriads of eternities, as you reckon the seconds of your existence?

Do you think it impossible that a perfect spirit like Jesus should be able to materialize the perispritic fluids of the superior worlds, and add and adapt the earthly fluids of which your bodies are composed to produce a tangible perispritic body, suited to his earthly mission, which should apparently represent the faculties and phases of your humanity. Remember that he was thoroughly acquainted with the action of all the fluids in space, and with all their properties, effects, combinations, transformations and uses, as well as with all the secrets of universal life and harmony, both in the superior worlds (even the highest) and in the inferior worlds, including your own; and with the formation, production, and characteristics of all their inhabitants.

This phenomenon is at present unique in the annals of your planet, but will be repeated when the time has come. It will then be better understood by men who have sufficiently advanced both in the knowledge of eternal truths, and in love, humility, and unselfishness. You will not stand alone in taking this view of the nature of Jesus; for when this book is published, many who are too timid to promulgate a new idea, will rally round you, and confirm our statements by revelations which they have received themselves.

This was revealed, as it were, to children twenty centuries ago; but can you suppose that you yourselves have yet arrived at years of discretion, O poor philosophers, whose wisdom consists in shaking to its foundation an edifice which you are powerless to replace, because it is insufficient for the needs of the age?

Jesus was not born of man, and no perishable matter entered into the completeness of his perfection. Let those understand who have ears to hear, and let those who deny seek to comprehend. Jesus was a perfect spirit, who had never fallen, and belonged to the small minority who have worked steadily at their progress, without departing from the straight path pointed out to them by their guides, and have

Digitized by Google

thus attained to perfection. Thus, the origin of the perfection of Jesus is lost in the darkness of bygone eternities; and he who watched over the formation and progress of your world as its protector and ruler, descended among you to set you an example of love, charity, and devotion.

But you must not forget that every one who is clothed in flesh, and subject to the law of material incarnation like yourselves, is fallible. Jesus was too pure to assume the garb of the guilty, and his spiritual nature was incompatible with a material incarnation, such as you undergo.

Jesus entered your world under a tangible spiritual appearance. The spirit assumed all the appearance of a body, and the perisprit which surrounded it was rendered more tangible, so as to create as complete an illusion as was necessary; but Jesus, a pure spirit among the purest of those who work under his direction at the progress and the fulfilment of the destinies of your planet and its humanity, always remained a spirit. Observe that as he was elevated above all the laws relating to incarnate spirits, he had a perfect knowledge of his origin, and the certainty of his future; which is alone sufficient to enable you, as Spiritists, to understand that he was not subject to the laws of incarnation in the same way as yourselves.

Jesus was not subject to any of the material necessities of human existence. But he conformed to them in appearance for the sake of example, as we shall explain in speaking of this emblematic figure of Jesus, and of the Temptation. The body which clothed him was only a premature example of the human organism, as it will exist in future ages in some parts of your planet, and as it now exists in the more advanced planets, except that the power of dispersing or reconstructing the tangible perisprit, or perispritic body at will, which Jesus possessed, belongs only to the pure spirits.

Let the materialists clothe Jesus with a robe of flesh like yours; they would do well if they could equal him, but they will never succeed in this unhappy age. Let the Deists deny the divinity of Jesus, for thus they draw nearer to Spiritism. The time has now come to proclaim the truth, and lay the

Digitized by Google

foundations of a simple and rational faith. God is indeed the sole Creative Power who governs the whole universe. God is the one sole universal but undivided Principle; He is the Creator, but He does not create by dividing his essence, for God is One. But you may and ought to call Jesus "his well-beloved son," and "our divine model;" for he is divine as being the direct agent of the Almighty. Jesus is the greatest essence after God, but he is not the only spiritual essence of the same degree, for every planet has a spirit attached to it who was its founder, and is its infallible protector and ruler, being constantly in direct communion with God, and receiving the divine inspiration immediately from him. He is also unfallen in a sense which we will explain presently.

None of you, and none of us, your spirit-guides, can say that we have never fallen; but we may all hope to share in the purity and happiness of Jesus, by perseverance in well-doing, and by the constant study of eternal truths.

Our Father is just and good, and we are his prodigal children. Let us then return to the Father's house; hasten, O hasten, dearly-loved brethren, for the Divine Model has rekindled his torch, which the malignant vapours of your world had dimmed, and it burns with a brighter radiance. Quicken your steps, for it is growing late, and your Father is standing on the threshold to welcome you with open arms.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN,

With the concurrence of the Apostles.

§ 16. What do you mean by saying, "this unhappy age?"

It will be long before any man can live the life of Jesus; for it is still too far beyond your reach; nevertheless, you may approach it. Know that the men of your planet, and all spirits whomsoever, whether they inhabit the inferior worlds for trials and expiations, or on a mission; or whether they have attained to the superior worlds, should share in the purity and happiness of Jesus, but how can they do this? They must attain to perfection by the constant practice of

Digitized by Google

love, which is the source and means of all progress in time and eternity, for it leads up to all knowledge, and even to God.

§ 16. Why do you say that God is indivisible, and that he does not create by dividing his essence?

In allusion to the doctrine of the Three Persons.

§ 17. Some have understood the words of the angel (v. 28) literally: "The Lord is with thee;" and have supposed that God incarnated Himself in the person of Jesus.

Human matter materializes whatever it touches. Do you not degrade the Divinity, when you draw such conclusions? The Lord was with Mary, and she was blessed among all women, simply because Mary was a very pure spirit on an earthly mission.

§ 18. What is the spiritual meaning of the words "You have found favour with God?" (v. 30.)

They signify, "God has granted you the mission which you desired."

§ 19. Why do the angel's words (v. 31), when interpreted literally, imply the reality of a miraculous conception?

It was not intended that men should lift the veil which concealed the secrets of the other world from them. It was necessary for them to believe in sensible and impressional matter, and in physical pain to understand the sacrifice. They were intended to believe in the divine origin of Jesus, to keep them under the yoke till his mission should be accepted, and his laws obeyed.

§ 20. Why did the angel say to Mary (v. 33), "The Lord God shall give him the throne of David his father, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever?"

It was needful that the promises of the Old Testament and the interpretations which they had received should be connected with the requirements of the present, and the promises of the future. Joseph was incarnated in the tribe of David rather than in another, that the apparent parentage of Jesus might agree with the prophecies. Everything is linked together in the designs of the Lord, and in the successive events which prepare and develop your progress and regeneration in each succeeding age.

Digitized by Google

§ 21. What is the real meaning of the expression (v. 33), "His kingdom shall have no end?"

It will have no end, because your protector will conduct you to perfection.

Is not this emblematic, and will not his kingdom be established eternally when you shall have attained to it?

§ 22. What is the meaning of the words, "The Holy Spirit shall rest upon thee?"

The superior spirit thus announced to Mary that her eyes would be opened, and that she would comprehend what then appeared to her as an impenetrable mystery. Afterwards, when the time had come, she reflected on the words of the angel to Joseph, "That which is born in her, has been formed by the Holy Spirit," and comprehended the special mission that Jesus came to fulfil. But nevertheless, like others, she attributed the fulfilment of the prediction to direct divine agency, as it was intended that she should.

§ 23. What is the meaning of the words, "The Power of the Most High shall overshadow thee?"

These words have been misunderstood. Mary was terrified at the stain upon her character which might result from the fulfilment of the prediction, and the spirit wished to reassure her.

Is this why her offspring should be called "the son of God?"

These words confirm what we have just told you.

"That which shall be born of you (by the operation of the Holy Spirit) will be called the Son of God." This title, in the true spiritual sense of the words, is only applied to Jesus on account of his purity, and you may all acquire it in the same sense.*

Humanly speaking, this title was intended to enhance the dignity of men in their own eyes, and to lead them to comprehend the love of God. How great (in human eyes) that God must be who could receive no sacrifice but his well-beloved, and (as regards you) his only son; and also

* This is what is prophesied and promised in Revelations, ch. xxii. v. 6 and 7.

Digitized by Google

how great, in his eyes, must be the worth of mankind to lead him to redeem them by such a sacrifice!

O men, do not forget that you are still but as little children, and that every age must be addressed in appropriate language which it can receive and understand.

Do not allow yourselves to be turned aside by those unphilosophical philosophers who do not understand the transitory but necessary means of progress by revelation, and deny the existence and object of spiritual manifestations. These manifestations are produced by the will of the Supreme Master to prepare for your regeneration, and will be continued in order to effect it. These philosophers are instruments who prepare the way, without knowing it, and often without wishing it. The path was blocked, and they are removing the obstacles. We shall erect a building that man will not attempt to destroy, for he will find peace, hope, and happiness within.

§ 23. What is meant by the words (v. 37), "Nothing shall be impossible to God?"

Spiritually, these words relate to the manifestation and appearance of Jesus; and from Mary's point of view they referred to what she regarded as a miracle;—*i.e.*, an impossibility.

§ 24. What is the meaning of the same expression, as repeated by men?

God is the sole universal principle, and the sole creative power in the infinite regions of space, and he is immutable and eternal. He has foreseen, willed and directed everything from all eternity; thus all things originate in his will, and nothing takes place without his permission. There is neither "chance" nor "miracle," but God everywhere.

The human expressions "chance" and "miracle" are nonsense in the sight of God. You must regard them as only expressing the ignorance of men respecting the true causes of phenomena and events, which nevertheless always take place either by the normal action of the immutable laws of nature, or by their application, under spirit action, in the various planets.

Digitized by Google

Such human expressions as "possible," and "impossible," are, like "space," "time," and "duration," nonsense as applied to God. They have no meaning except when applied to living creatures, in consequence of the ignorance and feebleness of incarnate spirits, which results from their small moral and intellectual elevation, and slight knowledge of universal laws, and of spiritual action as limited and influenced by these laws.

Nothing physical is uncertain under spirit influence. All effects are the same, and follow a definite course, for everything in nature is immutable; but you should remember that you cannot understand everything. You may sometimes observe phenomena which surprise you because they are novelties; but they take place within the order of nature, though you are not yet able to comprehend them. But there may be something uncertain as regards spiritual action, from the free agency of incarnate spirits, which is moral and intellectual, and always within the limits of their necessary expiatory trials; but neither the incarnate nor errant spirit can act except according to the laws of nature, which he adapts, if necessary, to his medium, or to the effects which he desires to produce.

It is only within the limits and control of these laws that apparent deviations occur; and these results, being produced by applications of laws unknown to men, are regarded as miracles, in consequence of your ignorance.

There is nothing supernatural, for everything proceeds, always and everywhere, from the immutable will of God, according to the universal and immutable laws of nature which he has established from all eternity, and which thus pertain to his very essence.

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 39–45.

Mary's visit to Elisabeth.

(39) And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Judah; (40) And went into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. (41) And it came to pass that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb;

Digitized by Google

and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit; (42) And she cried out in a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. (43) And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (44) For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation was in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for exceeding joy; (45) And blessed is she that believed that there should be an accomplishment of the things which were told her from the Lord.

§ 25. The spirit of Jesus was beside Mary in the house of Elisabeth, for he accompanied her like one of your angel guardians. The spirit of John had no need to witness the arrival of Jesus; for he knew him, and was present there himself. He was free; for the sufferings which usually precede incarnation did not exist in his case. He suffered no anxiety, and did not lose consciousness of himself and his origin till the moment of his birth. But though he had nothing to suffer, the connection between the body and spirit was fully established, and the spirit was consequently able to influence the body when an additional testimony was required.

The words addressed by Elisabeth to Mary were spoken under the influence of the spirits of the Lord. Elisabeth thus spoke as one "filled with the Holy Spirit." She addressed Mary in language which they could both understand, and expressed herself consistently with the belief that all were intended to share, in consequence of a revelation appropriate to the state of intelligence, and the necessities of the age. This belief was to last until the words addressed to Mary should be explained in spirit and in truth by the New Revelation.

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 46–56.

The Song of Mary.

(46) And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord; (47) And my spirit hath rejoiced exceedingly in God my Saviour. (48) Because he hath looked upon the lowliness of his handmaid, for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; (49) Because the Mighty One hath done great things for me, and blessed is his name; (50) And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. (51) He hath put strength in his arm; he hath scattered the arrogant in the intentions of their hearts; (52) He hath pulled down the rulers from their thrones, and hath exalted the humble. (53) He hath

Digitized by Google

filled the hungry with good things, and hath sent the rich away destitute. (54) He hath aided Israel his servant, in remembrance of his mercy. (55) As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever. (56) And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

§ 26 (verses 46–48). No explanation is required here, but you would do well to imitate such an outburst of love and gratitude. (Verses 49, 50.) You may apply these verses to your own times, which behold the dawn of the regeneration of mankind. Praise the Lord, for he has sent you his good spirits, to whom he has entrusted the torch of Spiritism, and who wave it over the earth, shedding its soft pure light in all directions, and diffusing truth, charity and love among you. O praise the Lord, for he is doing great things for you, and checks the designs of the wicked. He arrests the corruption which threatens to destroy you, and gives you balm to heal your wounds; O bless and praise the Lord, for his love and mercy are boundless! (Verses 51–55.) The Lord still manifests his power to you, and employs very feeble instruments to overthrow the most powerful among men. Bless the Lord, for the dominion of pride has reached its end. Man is an instrument; and the Spiritist, and especially the medium, is the instrument which good spirits employ to humble pride, ambition, avarice and tyranny. (We make no special allusions here.)

Israel is a symbolic name which denotes all mankind. Men are one in the sight of God, for there are neither peoples nor nationalities in his sight. The Lord shows mercy to those who love him and keep his commandments, but his mighty arm destroys the proud who lift their haughty heads too high. The Lord gives bread to the little child, who asks it in the sincerity of his heart; but he despoils the proud man who trusts in his riches. Bless the Lord, then, for he is the support of the feeble, and the terror of the wicked.

§ 27. Does the hidden sense of v. 30 refer to the law of reincarnation, as the sublime and harmonious expression of the justice and infinite mercy of God?

Yes; and the words of the text also refer to the Second

Digitized by Google

Commandment (Exodus, ch. xx. v. 5 & 6) "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep my commandments."

The idea is the same, for the hand of God presses heavily upon man from generation to generation, by reincarnation, until he finally frees him from all impurities by expiation and reparation, and leads him to moral improvement and progress.

Man has been blind enough to suppose that God punishes the father in his children. This was the apparent meaning of the letter, and was well suited to the Hebrews, who needed to be led by terror; but the knowledge of the God of Love showed that this was impossible. Man has not attempted to understand the distinction between goodness and vengeance. The letter was intended for primitive nations; but it is for you to seek for the spirit.

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 57-66.

Birth of John.

(57) Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered, and she brought forth a son. (58) And her neighbours and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had showed great mercy upon her, and they rejoiced with her. (59) And it came to pass that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. (60) And his mother answered and said, Not so, but he shall be called John. (61) And they said to her, There is no one among thy relations who is called by this name. (6) And they made signs to his father what he would desire to have him called. (63) And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote saying, His name is John; and they all wondered. (64) And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue; and he spake, and praised God. (65) And fear came on all that dwelt round about them, and all these sayings were discussed throughout the hill-country of Judæa. (66) And all they who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What then shall this child be? And the hand of the Lord was with him.

§ 28. These verses require no comment. Everything is linked together in the designs of the Lord; and all these events were previously arranged to aid in the accomplishment of the work.

Digitized by Google

Elisabeth's reply to her friends and relations (v. 60) was not due to spiritual inspiration. Zacharias had already used writing-tablets to inform her of the words of the angel who had appeared to him in the temple.

As we have told you how Zacharias was rendered dumb, you will understand how he recovered his speech. The fluids which had burdened his tongue, and produced a kind of paralysis were thrown off by means of spiritual magnetism.

LUKE, CHAP. I.—VERSES 67–80.

Song of Zacharias.

(67) And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied saying, (68) Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, (69) And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (70) As he hath spoken through the mouth of his holy prophets from their time. (71) Deliverance from our enemies, and from the hand of all those who hate us (72) To perform mercy with our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; (73) The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, (74) That he would grant unto us that being delivered from the hand of all our enemies, we should serve him without fear (75) In holiness and righteousness in his presence all the days of our life. (76) And thou, child, shalt be called a Prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways (77) To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the forgiveness of their sins. (78) Through the tender mercies of our God, whereby the dawn from on high hath beamed upon us (79) To shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (80) And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts, until the day of his declaring himself to Israel.

§ 29. You also, like Zacharias, may praise the Lord for the mercy which he has shown you. After having first visited and redeemed his people by the coming of Jesus, he visits and redeems them again by the coming of the Truth.

The Hebrews expected that the promised Messiah would be a material deliverer. They looked at everything with reference to the present, and did not understand that their vices were the enemies from which they needed to be delivered. But you, Spiritists, ought to understand this, and exert all your efforts to contribute to your deliverance, as the disciples of Jesus are bound to do, after tearing away the lying masks with which men have concealed the truths which

Digitized by Google

he taught. The true disciples of Jesus are those who now walk in his steps, guided by the torch of Spiritism (that is, by the spirits of the Lord, who are the virtues of the heavens which are shaken); and thus guided, seek for truth in his words. The sun still shines for you, and the Lord enlightens you. Do not close your eyes, but prepare the way for him, so that he can advance to lead you to his kingdom, which is moral and intellectual perfection. Jesus spoke truth, but he himself declared that he did not reveal all the truth. He gave men only what they could bear, in such a manner that they were able to receive it. If men were contented with what they had received, the truth would not have to conquer its kingdom, which traditions, prejudices, and doctrines upheld by worldly motives have all combined to destroy.

The time has come for the revelation of the truth, freed from all the lies which veil it from human eyes, and plunge men in darkness notwithstanding its divine radiance.

God has not abandoned his children to lies, but has permitted them to follow the path which they had chosen, that it might develop their experience by showing them the futility of their efforts. At the present day you have advanced, and your eyes, wearied with searching in the dark, ask for light, and turn towards it. Light and truth go hand in hand, but everything must have a beginning. You have been told that the Spirit of Truth is to descend among you, and its advent will be the end of the world; by which you must understand the end of your weakness and ignorance; but its advent must be preceded by a preparatory period, upon which you are now entering.

John, the forerunner of Jesus, called men to repentance and the baptism of water, but Jesus came to teach them how to repent, and to baptize them with the Holy Spirit. That is, he caused the spirits of the Lord to descend upon them, and to develop medianimic faculties in them, which fitted them to receive inspiration.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit means communion with the exalted spirits who watch over you; but this communion

Digitized by Google

can still be only attained, as at the time of Jesus, by those who are pure, and filled with zeal, love and faith, like his faithful Apostles.

Spiritism summons you to the study of the truth, and teaches you to distinguish between truth and falsehood. It comes to stimulate and develop your experience, clearness of judgment, devotion, and intelligence, and to render you worthy of the aid of exalted spirits, who will lead you to all truth. In short, it comes as the harbinger of that state of perfection to which you ought to attain.

It is designed to prepare you for this state by gradually opening your eyes to the light, and by developing your intelligence till you are able to free yourselves at once and for ever from all the weakness of your humanity, that you may be ready to receive the "Spirit of Truth" when his reign shall commence; and to comprehend the whole extent of the truth.

In order to attain this end, you must labour unceasingly to destroy in yourselves all that belongs to the old man. You must struggle against your faults and weaknesses, and arm yourselves against your own flesh lest you should again yield to its temptations. You must labour constantly at your moral progress that you may be able to aid your brethren to advance, and thus help to prepare for the advent of the Spirit of Truth.

Thus the object of Spiritism is human perfection, and the three methods of attaining it are love, study, and charity. In urging you thus to arm yourselves against your own flesh, we do not desire to advise you to imitate your fathers in material mortifications, or to abstain from any human appetites which the laws of your nature require: far from that. You cannot conquer the flesh by wearing a hair shirt, nor can you do so by refusing what is just and necessary for the requirements of your body; but by keeping yourselves constantly on guard against abuse and excess.

Do not forget the Master's words, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" against temptation. Therefore be on your guard, and concede to your bodily instincts whatever

Digitized by Google

is needful for matter; but never exceed the limits of a wise sobriety.

Do not make yourselves martyrs with the object of pleasing God. On the contrary, you should endeavour to preserve your bodies in that state of equilibrium needful to strengthen you to meet your trials. Nor should you abandon yourselves to sloth, but watch and pray without ceasing; or rather, O men whose intelligence is weak, because of the weakness of your faith, never forget that you are under your Father's eye, and that he judges not only your most secret actions, but the most hidden thoughts of your heart. Look, therefore, that your thoughts and actions might always be fully laid open not only before your Father's eye, but also before all your brethren. Pray that your actions may always correspond with your thoughts. The prayer which pleases God is work, either of the mind or body, and each should therefore work at the task assigned him, and thus pray without ceasing. Work, for work is prayer; and watch, for this protects you by the vigilance which you constantly exert over yourselves, and you will then fear temptation no more. Watch and pray, brethren, for the Master reckons upon your faithful service.

The Spirit of Truth will come to reveal everything which still remains hidden, and will teach you to look upon the holy light without being dazzled. The promised Spirit of Truth is not a corporeal or fluidic being; but the whole knowledge of the Truth. You can only acquire this knowledge by perfection, and your perfection can only be effected by the spirits of the Lord (either in the errant state, or incarnated on a mission) under the direction of your protector.

This is why Jesus assumed the title of Christ, or Messenger; and of "the Spirit of Truth" as the completion and sanctification of the Truth.

The truth personified in Jesus, can only descend among you when you are worthy to receive it; and you cannot become worthy of it without the aid of the errant and incarnate missionaries.

Thus you must understand the Spirit of Truth to be a

Digitized by Google

complex and symbolical expression. It includes the exalted spirits who aid Jesus in his mission as his forerunners, and lead you gradually by his directions, through the new and preparatory era of Spiritism, towards the full knowledge of the truth; and Jesus himself will finally come to give men this perfect knowledge, when they are ready to receive it, and worthy and able to sustain it.

MATTHEW, CHAP. I.—VERSES 18–25.

Appearance of the angel to Joseph in a dream.

(18) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was thus: His mother Mary having been betrothed to Joseph, it was found that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit before they had been together. (19) And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wishing to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her secretly. (20) And while he was thinking over these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take to thyself Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. (21) And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. (22) And all this was done that the word spoken by the Lord through the prophet should be fulfilled, saying (23) Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, the translation of which is, God with us. (24) And Joseph having awaked from his sleep, acted as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took to himself his wife; (25) And knew her not until she had brought forth her firstborn son, and he called his name Jesus.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSES 1–7.

"Birth" of Jesus through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

(1) And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Cæsar Augustus that the whole civilized world should be registered; (2) And this registration was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. (3) And all went to be registered, each in his own city. (4) And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth to Judæa, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David; (5) To be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was pregnant. (6) And so it was that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered; (7) And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him down in the manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

§ 30. Joseph did not, like Jesus, remember his origin, or perceive his destiny, for he was subject to the laws of human

Digitized by Google

incarnation, notwithstanding the superiority of his spirit. He was a just man, but he was a man; and being influenced by human prejudices, he intended at first to divorce Mary secretly.

The revelation made to him by the angel in a dream partly removed the veil from his intelligence. He was a lofty-spirited man, and understood the sanctity of his mission. He therefore joyfully accepted the part in the work assigned to him, which was the human charge of the Lord.

Do not be surprised that the Evangelist openly published the secret resolution formed by Joseph, and the secret revelation which set it aside. It was necessary for all to understand, in due time, that Jesus was not born like other men; and the words of the angel, "That which is born in her has been formed by the Holy Spirit," were useful in their literal sense, while the spiritual meaning was reserved to form the basis of the new revelation of the future.

You should understand how the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, although this manifestation has sometimes been criticised or ridiculed. It is always better to suspend your judgment than to deny or ridicule what you do not understand.

During sleep, the spirit is often sufficiently freed from matter to commune with the friendly spirits around it. When this disengagement is complete, the spirit rises and mingles with the heavenly hosts, if it is itself sufficiently elevated, though without ever leaving the zone of your planet. If the disengagement is incomplete, sympathizing spirits descend towards you.

This communion takes place, whatever may be your moral state, but generally with spirits of your own degree. Sometimes, however, higher spirits descend, to instruct you during these brief intervals of freedom, to remind you of your engagements, and to show you the difficulties with which you will have to contend.

All communication which takes place during sleep may be classed among dreams, but whereas ordinary dreams are

Digitized by Google

[illegible] and symbolical expression. It includes the exalted [illegible] Jesus in his mission as his forerunners, and [illegible] gradually by his directions, through the new and [illegible] towards the full knowledge of [illegible] and Jesus himself will finally come to give men [illegible] knowledge, when they are ready to receive it, [illegible] worthy and able to sustain it.

MATTHEW, CHAP. I.—VERSES 18–25.

[illegible] Joseph in a dream.

[illegible] Jesus Christ was thus: His mother Mary [illegible] was pregnant by [illegible] And Joseph her [illegible] to put her to shame, [illegible] he was thinking over [illegible] to him in a dream. [illegible] Mary thy wife, [illegible] And she [illegible] Jesus, for he shall [illegible] his was done that the [illegible] should be fulfilled, saying [illegible] and shall bring forth a son, [illegible] of which is, God [illegible] from his sleep, acted as the [illegible] to himself his wife; [illegible] she had brought forth her firstborn son, [illegible] his name Jesus.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSES 1–7.

[illegible] Jesus through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

[illegible] in those days that a decree went out from [illegible] world should be registered; [illegible] was first made when Cyrenius was governor of [illegible] to be registered, each in his own city. [illegible] from the city of Nazareth to [illegible] Bethlehem, because he was [illegible] To be registered with Mary, his [illegible] And so it was that while they [illegible] were accomplished that she should be delivered; [illegible] her firstborn son, and wrapped him in [illegible] down in the manger, because there was [illegible]

[illegible] did not, like Jesus, remember his origin, or [illegible] for he was subject to the laws of human

incarnation, notwithstanding the superiority of his spirit. He was a just man, but he was a man; and being influenced by human prejudices, he intended at first to divorce Mary secretly.

The revelation made to him by the angel in a dream partly removed the veil from his intelligence. He was a lofty-spirited man, and understood the sanctity of his mission. He therefore joyfully accepted the part in the work assigned to him, which was the human charge of the Lord.

Do not be surprised that the Evangelist openly published the secret resolution formed by Joseph, and the secret revelation which set it aside. It was necessary for all to understand, in due time, that Jesus was not born like other men; and the words of the angel, "That which is born in her has been formed by the Holy Spirit," were useful in their literal sense, while the spiritual meaning was reserved to form the basis of the new revelation of the future.

You should understand how the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, although this manifestation has sometimes been criticised or ridiculed. It is always better to suspend your judgment than to deny or ridicule what you do not understand.

During sleep, the spirit is often sufficiently freed from matter to commune with the friendly spirits around it. When this disengagement is complete, the spirit rises and mingles with the heavenly hosts, if it is itself sufficiently elevated, though without ever leaving the zone of your planet. If the disengagement is incomplete, sympathizing spirits descend towards you.

This communion takes place, whatever may be your moral state, but generally with spirits of your own degree. Sometimes, however, higher spirits descend, to instruct you during these brief intervals of freedom, to remind you of your engagements, and to show you the difficulties with which you will have to contend.

All communication which takes place during sleep may be classed among dreams, but whereas ordinary dreams are

Digitized by Google

generally the result of recollections, or of the struggle between matter and spirit, dreams like that of Joseph are revelations. But do not, on this account, try to discover the meaning of all your dreams, any more than you would expect to find a connected meaning in the prattle of a child.

There was communion of spirit with spirit in the case of Joseph, and just as you often remember your dreams, however trivial, when the spirit is imperfectly disengaged, so Joseph remembered what had passed when he awoke.

When the spirit is completely disengaged, it only retains this recollection in exceptional cases, when the impression has been renewed on waking by spiritual influence. Many of your human recollections are due to a similar influence, which recalls past events when they may be useful to you in the future.

§ 31. Throughout the whole of his earthly mission, Jesus was looked upon as a man, the son of Mary and Joseph.

Subsequently to the "ascension," when the annunciation to Mary and the dream of Joseph were first made public, Jesus was regarded as a man, and at the same time as an incarnate God, "miraculously" born, through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

The common belief regarding the "birth" of Jesus, was due to a spiritual revelation suited to the necessities and intelligence of the age, and was needful to prepare mankind to understand spiritual life. It was consequently shared by the evangelists, the apostles, the disciples, and the multitude; for if the evangelists had known the spiritual origin of Jesus, they would have been impostors, who represented him as subject to the conditions of your humanity, and at the same time as a divine incarnation.

The evangelists, like the apostles and disciples, were simple-minded in their incarnate state, and were as little children in humility and intelligence. They received the spiritual revelation made to Mary and Joseph, as sent from God himself. They faithfully recorded this revelation and the events which followed, and each of them accomplished his appointed task by medianimic influence and inspiration.

Digitized by Google

This was necessary (compare § 14) because men required a striking example. The idealization of matter has prepared you to understand the spiritual life; and time and successive reincarnations have continued your expiation, reparation, and progress for nearly twenty centuries. You have now been led on to the new era of Spiritism, for which the progress which you have slowly and laboriously acquired since the Master descended among you, has prepared the way.

The letter has borne its fruits, and is no longer suited to the needs of your age, and to the condition and progress of your intelligence. Now that it kills, it must be superseded by the Spirit which giveth life. The time has come to explain to you how the birth of Jesus was effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the will of God, and the eternally immutable laws of nature. It was the result of spiritual and magnetic action, by means of appropriate fluids.

Magnetism is the universal agent which moves everything, and pervades all the kingdoms of nature. Is it not magnetic attraction which attracts the male to the female even in the most desolate parts of the earth, although they may be widely separated? Is it not magnetic attraction which attracts the fertilizing principle from one flower to another, and which draws together the substances needful to form minerals in the bowels of the earth, and leads the waters to flow towards dry countries which require irrigation?

Everything in the universe is due to magnetic attraction; it is the great law which governs all things. When man shall be sufficiently enlightened to understand its full extent, the world will be subject to his control, for he will be able to direct its material action; but he cannot attain this power without a long and profound study of causes, or until he is filled with love and reverence for Him who has entrusted him with such great powers. When man is guided by this love and reverence, and filled with heartfelt humility and unselfishness, study and labour will finally enable him to acquire a knowledge of the various natures, properties and effects of all fluids, and of their

Digitized by Google

various combinations and transformations. He will then possess the secret of universal life, and of the formation of all things in all the kingdoms of nature, through combined spiritual and magnetic action, according to the immutable laws of God.

The magnetic fluids link together all the worlds in the universe, and unite all spirits, whether incarnate or not. It is a universal bond that God has given us, to surround us like a single being, and to aid us to ascend towards him by the union of our strength. The fluids are united by magnetic action; and everything in nature is attraction depending on this universal agent.

In addition to animal, vegetable, and universal magnetism, human and spiritual magnetism also exist on your planet.

Human magnetism is the concentration of the fluids contained in man, and in the surrounding atmosphere, by the power of the human will. It can act by means of these fluids at some distance between man and man; or on objects.

Spirit-magnetism results from the concentration of the will of spirits, which draws around them whatever fluids may be contained in man, or scattered through space. They use these fluids to act on men or things, and to effect their objects.

The birth of Jesus was the work of the Holy Spirit, for it was the work of the Spirits of the Lord, and was effected by spiritual magnetism. You can judge of the power of well-directed human fluids, by the effects of spiritual magnetism on man.

The spirits appointed to prepare for the appearance of the Messiah upon earth, drew around Mary the fluids needed to produce an illusion, and the annunciation made to her by the angel, thus appeared to her to be literally fulfilled.

We may remind you that those who are supposed to be insane, but are only the sport of obsessing spirits, sometimes experience similar illusions; but in such cases, the illusion is confined to themselves alone, and does not extend to those around them.

The subsequent "birth" of the child was also the work of

Digitized by Google

the Holy Spirit, for it was effected by the Spirits of the Lord. It was simply apparent, for, at the appointed period, the surrounding spirits placed Mary under a magnetic-spiritual influence, and caused her to believe that a real birth had taken place.

You know that a human magnetizer can cause his subject to experience all sensations and impressions in the somnambulic state by the power of his will, and of well-directed human fluids. He can make him see and believe whatever he wishes, and can impress him with a fiction as if it were a reality, and make him apparently experience, and even endure, suffering, and then free him from it. If you had studied all the phases of human magnetism you would have seen subjects who are easily affected influenced without being in the magnetic sleep, or at least without exhibiting any of its recognized symptoms. In such cases, magnetic action has influenced the spirit without affecting the body.

There are some subjects who enjoy a development of their faculties above ordinary humanity. These exceptional subjects are not only gifted with more than human faculties, like all free spirits, but they enjoy faculties superior to those of your best clairvoyants, and are sometimes even capable of solving problems that an incarnate spirit dare not and cannot propound; questions which man dare not propose to science, not from humility, or a wise estimate of his powers, but because he believes it to be incapable of solving them. These subjects are still rare, but will become more numerous by the employment of the power which is entrusted to you. They will conduce vastly to the improvement of the arts and sciences on your planet. These instruments are more perfect than others, but are also more easily injured, for when medianimic faculties are ill-directed, they wear out more rapidly. On this account, but few have been hitherto revealed to you, for you must first increase your experience of magnetism.

You are also aware that forgetfulness on waking is the rule in somnambulism, but in exceptional cases the magnetizer can, by the power of his will, and by an express command,

Digitized by Google

enable the somnambulist to retain the memory of something which has occurred in his trance, after he awakes.

Everything which the human magnetizer can perform on his subject by human magnetism, can also be effected by spirits through spirit-magnetism. They act with more discernment and knowledge than man acts on man, according to the conditions necessary to produce the results which they wish to attain. They can (as spiritual science teaches you) cause you to feel blows, or pain arising and ceasing at the will of those who act upon you without your being able to perceive it. You also know by many examples in all ages, as well as in your own, how the blow, or pain, is felt.

We will explain the action of magnetism on the spirit of the magnetized subject. This explanation applies both to human and to spirit-magnetism; only the causes and results of the action of spirit-magnetism are purer. Nevertheless, the result of both cases is the same; the incarnate spirit is disengaged under more or less favourable conditions, in proportion to the elevation of the magnetizer, whether man or spirit.

You must understand that magnetism effects the disengagement of the spirit, and therefore cannot work illusions upon it. When the spirit is thus released from the bonds of the flesh, it becomes the willing agent of its magnetizer, whether the magnetic action proceeds from a free or from an incarnate spirit. Recollection on awaking results from the compliance of the magnetized subject, who consents to the wishes of his magnetizer, either from sympathy, weakness, or subordination, according to the relations existing between them. He thus preserves the recollection of the words or actions which he has voluntarily agreed upon during sleep, under the influence of material sensations and impressions, which retain the influence of the engagement he has undertaken; and, upon awaking, he remembers them as if they had actually taken place. If the spirits of the magnetizer and the subject are in sympathy, the recollection is due to the understanding which exists between them; if the subject is weaker than the magnetizer, and the latter imposes the

Digitized by Google

recollection by his arbitrary will, the free spirit sometimes consents; but if the spirit of the subject is inferior to that of the magnetizer, it obeys from deference and respect.

It was needful for Mary to believe in a real birth, and to remember circumstances which she could attest as if they had really happened. The spirits appointed to prepare for the appearance of the Messiah on your earth placed Mary under the influence of spirit magnetism, and in this somnambulic condition they caused her to perceive and to experience whatever was necessary. Mary was then in the same condition as the subjects of whom we have just spoken, who are met with, though rarely, at the present day. It therefore appeared to Mary as if a birth had actually taken place, and in due time she fulfilled the formalities prescribed for purification by the law of Moses.

As Mary was in sympathy with the high spirits who acted on her, she undertook to retain in her material memory the circumstances which it was necessary for her to remember, and thus to obey the will which was imposed on her in the name of the Lord.

The magnetic-spiritual influence ceased at the moment when Jesus appeared as if by ordinary "birth," under the form of a new-born infant, and Mary took the infant in her arms, believing that it was born from her through the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Mary was almost a child in years, and very inexperienced in human affairs, having always lived in adoration and contemplation. She took the infant and blessed God.

The spirits who surround you, and who have reached a certain degree of elevation, can act on the fluids by their will-power, and attract those which are necessary. By combining these, they can impress the bodily eyes of men with whatever pictures they desire them to see.

These methods are only employed in important cases, and man ought not to imagine that he is always subject to these spiritual hallucinations; but they are employed whenever they are necessary to attain a result useful to mankind. By "spiritual hallucinations" we mean those spiritual effects

Digitized by Google

which represent something to human eyes which has no actual material or spiritual existence, but which is only an illusion produced by spirit influence, by means of a simple combination of fluids. The phenomenon called "the multiplication of the loaves and fishes," which we shall explain in its place, was simply due to spirit action, and the combination of fluids necessary to produce the required result.

By similar methods, guilty spirits in the errant state are brought face to face with their victims, or with the crimes which they have committed, and either see the bloody panorama of the past or the fearful sufferings of the future unrolled before them. The fluids used by the ministering spirits produce living pictures or the appearance of objects to the eyes of the guilty, and form a complete illusion in either case.

If necessary, the illusion might have been extended to those around Mary; but the mysterious prestige which was to attach to this "birth" forbade it. Mary was alone at the time, and it was therefore easy to produce an illusion which did not require to be carried very far in the case of one whose material life had scarcely unfolded; for the contemplative life of Mary had shielded her from all material aspirations and sensations.

We have told you that Mary was a very pure spirit, whose mission was to aid in a work which was about to be accomplished. She did not seek, like you, to understand the means by which unusual occurrences might be effected. The angel had assured her that she would have a son (to human eyes); whose essence should be different from hers, or from the human essence of your planet. She obeyed, and fulfilled the task which she had accepted, with faith, submission, and love. The angel had informed her that she was only an instrument, and she received the child which she believed to be her own, and of which the human charge was assigned to her, as the work of the Holy Spirit, without seeking for a natural solution to the problem.

Let not those who are always finding fault say that this was only a vain show.

Digitized by Google

It is not so, for your nature is subject to many mysteries which you do not understand, and which arise solely from the combination of these fluids, which we make use of for your benefit and progress. We never act capriciously, but always in accordance with the will of the Lord.

All that occurred was necessary to commence the new transitory era on which humanity was then about to enter, and to prepare for the advent of the present era of Spiritism and the New Revelation.

The progressive revelation of each era is appropriate to the needs of the age, and to the state of intelligence of the time. It is veiled by the letter when necessary, always teaching you more and more truth in proportion as you are able to receive and bear it, and gradually lifting part of the veil which conceals it from your gaze.

The Apostles said well that Jesus had a body similar to yours. Had not his body the appearance of yours? Were not his bodily requirements apparently the same? Yes: Jesus had a body similar to yours, but not of the same nature.

The birth of Jesus was the work of the Holy Spirit, for all its preceding and attending circumstances were the work of the spirits of the Lord (compare § 14).

The appearance of Jesus was his own act. It was necessary for him to undertake this mission, firstly, because he was entrusted with the progress of man; and, secondly, because he was the only spirit labouring at the progress of your planet, and of its humanity, whose power over the superior regions enabled him to appropriate the elements which enter into the formation of bodies in the fluidic worlds to the fluids of your planet, and thus to produce a body of a mixed nature, but almost material, simulating to human eyes the body of man in your world. No other body could have answered the required conditions. Jesus is in truth a perfect spirit, pure among the purest of those who labour under his direction at your progress, regeneration, and physical, moral and intellectual transformation, to lead you to perfection. Jesus was not subject to incarnation upon any planet whatever; but was thoroughly acquainted from the first with all

Digitized by Google

the fluids fitted for incorporation, or incarnation on all the material or fluidic worlds, and with the application of all the immutable and universal laws of nature. He alone possessed sufficient knowledge and power to construct this perispritic envelope resembling the human body, fitted for long tangibility, and intended to serve for the accomplishment of his earthly mission. He alone had the power to abandon it, or to resume it at any moment, by holding its constituent atoms always ready to separate or to combine under the influence of his powerful will.

But his elevation was so great as to be incompatible with your essence, and he could not be bound to material human incarnation. He could no more endure the contact of matter than you can endure a foul odour.

Matter oppresses spirit in proportion to its density, and even if a superior spirit assumes a material body to accomplish a mission among you, he is more or less fallible, and does not pass an absolutely unsullied life. Yet you have even now among you missionary spirits who endure the burden of the flesh.

Jesus could not, and ought not, on account of his spiritual nature and position to endure this slavery. During the period that the necessities of his mission required him to appear among men, he retained full knowledge of his origin, and the certainty of his future. He still was and continued to be the protector and ruler of the world, ruling over life and universal harmony in all the kingdoms of nature. He was still in constant communion with God, and gave his commands through his messengers to the whole hierarchy of spirits who guide your planet and its humanity.

We have already told you (§ 14) that Jesus appeared on earth by incorporation. It is the only instance which has hitherto happened in your world, but will be repeated in due course, and when it occurs again, you will know that the hour of the regeneration foretold by Christ, and so long prepared and hoped for, has at length arrived.

Let those hear who have ears to hear, and let them not proudly deny what they cannot yet explain; for they are

Digitized by Google

ignorant of the natural laws which God has established. They know nothing of the properties and effects of the fluids; nor do they understand how their combinations and adaptations can produce beings *à priori* in the material or fluidic worlds scattered throughout space either by incarnation or by incorporation, but always in accordance with immutable law. The birth of Jesus was simply an appearance, effected by the spirits of the Lord, according to the divine will, and appropriate to the intelligence of the age. The appearance of Jesus was thus that of a materialized spirit, similar to those which have appeared at all ages, and which you may meet with at the present day; but with this difference only, that the perisprit was humanized by the powerful will of the Master acting on the surrounding fluids, and while presenting all the appearances of human life, was fitted for long tangibility, which was maintained or laid aside at the powerful will of Jesus, according to the necessities of his earthly mission.

It was reserved for the New Revelation to explain to you what mankind could not receive when the Christ descended among you, but which was hidden beneath the words spoken by the angel to Mary at the Annunciation, and to Joseph in a dream. It was left till then to raise the veil, to replace the letter by the spirit; and also to explain the error perpetuated by the letter, and by the ignorance of former ages; and to teach you the truth which the progress of intelligence enables you to receive.

Jesus did not assume a material human form contrary to the natural laws of your planet, and of other material worlds. The immutable will of God never departs from the laws which he has established from all eternity. Nor did Jesus assume a material human body like yours, according to the laws of your planet, through the act of Mary and Joseph. This would contradict the words of the angel, and blaspheme God himself by rejecting the word of his messenger as an absolute lie. The New Revelation explains the true spiritual significance of those words of the angel which have been wrongly interpreted, because they have been taken

Digitized by Google

literally, in ignorance of their true meaning: "That which is born in her is formed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will watch over thee, and the power of the Most High will overshadow thee." It replaces error by truth, and teaches men that the birth of Jesus was simply apparent, and that his appearance was wholly spiritual, and independent of the laws of human incarnation.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN,

With the concurrence of the Apostles.

§ 32. Had Joseph and Mary friends or relatives in Bethlehem, and if so, why was Mary obliged to take shelter in a stable, and to lay the "child" in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn?

The great influx of travellers set limits to hospitality, even in the inn. The Hebrews, especially those belonging to the lower classes, did not build princely hotels.

Joseph had a brother living at Bethlehem, but he could not accommodate him, because he had had no previous notice of his arrival, and his house was already crowded with other guests.

Joseph was not expected; his brother had invited him, but he would not part from Mary. He had therefore declined the invitation for himself and his wife, supposing that the "child" (which he knew by revelation would be a boy) would probably be born about that time.

It was not supposed that Mary would have ventured to undertake the journey, and therefore no one expected her; but "driven by the Spirit," to use a Scriptural phrase, (that is to say, under the inspiration of her guardian angel,) she resolved to do so at the last moment. It was needful that Jesus should be "born" thus, in a miserable place, far from men or from human assistance, to set a greater example of humility, and also to simplify the manner of his "birth" (compare § 31).

Mary was received into the house of Joseph's brother as soon as the departure of visitors had left room for her.

The news was spread that the "child" was "born;" but the

Digitized by Google

report travelled slowly, and Zacharias and Elisabeth did not hear it from common rumour, but from Joseph himself, who went to convey the good news to them. They went to adore "the little child," but as their words and actions were of no importance to the Gospel narratives, they were passed over in silence; and when their mission was fulfilled, they retired into obscurity, for there was no further need to mention them. It was the same with all the incarnate spirits who had asked to share in the accomplishment of the work which was to make the earthly mission of Jesus a reality.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSES 8–20.

The Shepherds.

(8) And there were in the same country shepherds, abiding in the field, and keeping watch over their flock by night; (9) And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were seized with great fear. (10) And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. (11) For a Saviour is born to you to-day, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. (12) And this shall be the sign to you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in the manger. (13) And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, (14) Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men. (15) And it came to pass, that when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go as far as Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath revealed to us. (16) And they came with haste, and they found Mary and Joseph; and the babe lying in the manger. (17) And when they had seen it, they inquired about the saying which had been told them respecting the child. (18) And all who heard it wondered at what was told them by the shepherds. (19) And Mary heard all these sayings, and kept them in her heart. (20) And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, as it was told to them.

§ 33. The spirit manifestation, and the appearance of the angel of the Lord to the shepherds, is easily explained by their being clairvoyant and clairaudient mediums.

The eyes of their spirits were opened under the influence of spirit magnetism. They were in a state of ecstasy caused by their spirits being completely liberated, and a bright light shone round them, which greatly alarmed them. They saw the surrounding fluids as we ourselves see them, for they

Digitized by Google

emit a bright light to our eyes, though they are invisible to you. This brightness is proportioned to the degree of elevation or advancement of the spirit, and never ceases to be visible to him, whatever may be his inferiority (even though he be a wicked or suffering spirit) except when he is condemned to darkness.

As the shepherds did not understand the simple cause of this brightness, which is only visible to human eyes under similarly exceptional circumstances, they regarded it a divine light manifested by God himself; and the appearance was afterwards called "the glory of God."

Your science has already ascertained the luminosity of the magnetic and electric fluids in their latent state. Somnambulists who were sufficiently impressionable and clairvoyant, while under the influence of human magnetism, have seen the luminous vapour flowing from the human body, as well as from wood, metal, and other objects.*

In future ages science will employ human magnetism and somnambulism to place subjects in conditions similar to the shepherds; and will thus substantiate the luminous condition of the surrounding fluids. These radiate a great brightness, which is permanent to the eyes of errant spirits, who are consequently subject neither to night, obscurity, or opacity. Their spiritual sight never encounters any obstacles or barriers in space.

The multitude of the heavenly host consisted of a number of good spirits, who concurred in this manifestation. The shepherds in their clairvoyant and clairaudient condition saw them, and heard the words which you call the song of the angels, and which have been handed down from age to age, and will be remembered for ages yet to come. "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, goodwill among men."

There is a lesson to be drawn from what happened to the

* This is confirmed by Dr. Charpignon, in a work entitled "Physiologie, Médécine, Métaphysique du Magnetisme," published in Paris in 1848 (Ed.) Reichenbach's Researches on Electricity and Magnetism, translated by Dr. Ashburner, are more accessible and better known to the English student.—(Trnsl.)

Digitized by Google

shepherds, in connection with what subsequently occurred in the case of the Magi. Man should never boast of the position which he occupies in your world; for in the eyes of the Lord, the humblest is sometimes the greatest.

Who were the first who received the announcement of this "birth"? Humble shepherds, living in solitude, without education, and without pride, face to face with Nature, and learning the secrets of the Divinity from that vast book. They were ignorant, but they had faith; and they loved and hoped, and this was enough for them to be deemed worthy to be the first to whom the glad tidings were announced.

But extremes meet. After the shepherds, the revelation was received by the learned and powerful Magi. It was to permeate all classes, and as it commenced at the lowest point of the scale, it was needful for it to ascend until the opposite pole was reached. The Magi were also believers, but their faith was not so pure. They were more anxious to verify a doubtful fact, than reliant on the words of the angel; but notwithstanding this, they also came to prostrate themselves before the infant, and brought the offerings which they offered to him as to the Lord; for without understanding it, they felt that the infant, if he existed, must be of an essence superior to their own, to be the occasion of such great events.

§ 24. Do your words respecting the shepherds and the Magi apply to the present time, and was what happened at the time of Jesus a foreshadowing of what would happen at the period of the new era of the spiritual revelation?

This is both a lesson and example to you. You ought, above all things, to bring the good news to the outcasts of society, for they need it most; but you should not neglect the higher classes for that reason.

Observe: the angel made his announcement to the shepherds, and then withdrew, and watched over them invisibly; knowing that their hearts were simple and upright; but he led the Magi, constantly showing them the star which guided them on their road. He conducted them because he knew that mundane splendours might have distracted their atten-

Digitized by Google

tion, and it was necessary to keep them constantly on the alert. Let the angel who made the announcement be your example, and imitate him.

Give your first care and most ardent love to those who are lowest in the world, but do not therefore neglect the prosperous; for it may be said of these, according to the true sense of words which human interpretations have falsified: "Many are called, but few are chosen."

Very few know how to avail themselves of the means which the Divine goodness has put into their hands, that they might advance themselves and their brothers.

Worldly prosperity is doubtless a more pleasant experience than poverty and disappointment; but it is also much more difficult to turn to good account.

Oh you who are blessed with worldly prosperity, it is not on your own account that riches have been entrusted to you, or that the events of your life always fall out in accordance with your wishes! No, they were not given to be used for material objects of pride and selfishness; and the only benefit which you should seek from them is a future moral benefit. The good things of the earth have been given you to use as an instrument and means of love and charity towards your brethren, and moral and intellectual progress for them and for you, and that you may learn to make a wise and generous use of them. You ought not to use them in providing yourselves with the luxuries of existence, but in alleviating the sufferings of the unhappy. They should not be used to help you to live in ignorance and idleness, but to acquire the knowledge which you may procure from study, which is always costly; and then to disperse it freely and abundantly to those who are deprived of your resources; or if your intelligence is insufficient for this, to cause necessary instruction to be imparted to the people, and to be imparted abundantly. It is not for your own sake that you enjoy inward satisfaction, and you ought not to confine yourself to saying, "I have had good luck, and was born under a prosperous star, for everything smiles on me." You ought first to bless and thank Him who has granted you such a

Digitized by Google

destiny, and you should think next of those who are less happy than you, and who have sometimes very heavy trials to endure. Console, strengthen, and advise them; put yourself in the place of those who suffer, and help them to bear the weight of their misfortunes; not superficially with the lips, but with heartfelt love and sympathy. Practise justice, love and charity towards all and for all, both materially, morally, and intellectually; and then, O then, we shall no longer say, "Many are called, but few are chosen," for the Lord will look down in approbation on you from the height of his throne; and as the loadstone attracts iron, he will lead you all to his feet, bound in the bonds of universal affection and brotherhood, to receive the crown of the Elect.

§ 35. You said that the Magi "were more curious to verify a doubtful fact than reliant on the word of the angel." Does this mean that they had received a spiritual revelation?

Yes; we shall explain it when we come to speak of their visit to Bethlehem.

§ 36. What is the exact meaning of the words, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace; goodwill amongst men?"

"In the highest," expresses the unequalled elevation of the Most High.

"Goodwill amongst men" refers to those who devote themselves to the service of the Lord, not by retiring from the world to perform penances, but by devoting their intellect, strength, and time to the good of their brethren, thus glorifying the Lord by work, the prayer of the heart; and by love and charity.

§ 37. Are we to understand (v. 15) "when the angels had gone away from them into heaven," to mean, after the good spirits had retired into space, and had ceased to be visible to the shepherds?

Yes; but there is a more exact explanation: After the ecstasy into which the shepherds had fallen had ceased, and they again suffered the restraints of the flesh, they ceased to be clairvoyant.

§ 38. What are we to understand by the expression, "Heaven," in reference to God?

Digitized by Google

Beloved ones, seek not to find in a word which man has abused, any reference to a definite place containing the Lord.

How mean is the mind of man, which has suffered the Infinite to confine his presence to "heaven," like a monarch in his palace!

How can we explain the attributes and the greatness of God to you, who cannot form an idea of infinite space?

Not being able to define such an idea, some men, whose ideas were beyond those of the vulgar, have imagined God to be so vast that they have annihilated his personality.

Others have imagined a God as narrow as themselves, and have made him so small that their churches are too vast to hold him.

There is only one medium between these two hypotheses. God dwells in the vastness of infinite space, a spirit so pure and ethereal that very few spirits can see him; and so omnipresent that he shines in all places without ever dividing himself, and thus preserves his individuality.

The only material comparison by which we can represent God to limited intelligences like yours, is the sun which illuminates you, and is the one centre of your world, which is a point in comparison, and radiates light, heat and fertility, whether it appears to your eyes in its full glory, or is hidden by the dark vapours which rise from the earth.

The Lord is the central and individual point in space, around whom all worlds move. He sheds his light and heat on all, but very few enjoy the sight of his shining rays.

The earthly vapours ascending from your guilty souls form a dense atmosphere between yourselves and him, which is occasionally penetrated by a few rays from time to time, after a storm, to remind you that as soon as these clouds shall be dissipated, his radiance will shine above you in all its purity.

How can your human word "God" express the ideal, the vast, the infinite, the eternal?

Heaven denotes boundless space, in which every being moves towards the central attraction, God, to whose feet everything which is perfect is attracted.

Digitized by Google

We will give you such further explanations as you are able to receive concerning God when the time has come.*

§ 39. What is the meaning of verses 18 and 19 in connection with v. 17?

The angel and the heavenly host appeared to the shepherds to enlighten men further, and to lead Mary to meditate still more earnestly on the importance of her mission, and to convince all who heard that this infant whom God had entrusted to her, and of whom she believed herself to be the mother by divine intervention, was really the Christ; or, in other words, the promised Messiah, whom the prophets of the old law had foretold.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSES 21–24.

The Circumcision and Purification.

(21) And when the eight days were accomplished to circumcise the child, his name also was called Jesus, as he was named by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. (22) And when the days of their purification were accomplished, according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord; (23) (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) (24) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.

§ 40. These words convey a lesson to those who rebel against the yoke imposed on them by religion, because they would desire to destroy the law rather than to fulfil it, when a new era opens before mankind at the appointed period.

Observe that the "parents" of Jesus conformed to the established regulations, and submitted the "little child" to them.

Never give cause for scandal; that is, do not scandalize your brothers by too hastily casting off the yoke which they bear.

When you reconstruct an edifice with the materials of one which is on the point of falling, you do not explode a mine, for the broken materials would be blown away, and might cause serious mischief; but you take down every stone

* Compare the Gospel of John, § 41.

Digitized by Google

carefully, and lay it aside (throwing away those which are decayed) ready for use in the new building, and when you have made your selection, you commence the new work, replacing the stones which have crumbled away from lapse of time, by new and solid ones, strong enough to support the superincumbent weight.

It is the same with moral renovation. You should not overturn beliefs and trample them under foot inconsiderately, for the remains would injure you. You should displace them one by one, carefully preserving the true stones, which are needful to support the edifice, and rejecting all the false ones, which only tend to destroy it.

The true stones which must be preserved are faith in God and submission to his law, in whatever language it is written, and under whatever form it is presented. If the religion under which you were born has taught you the love of God, no matter under what name, and has taught you to practise love and charity, the stones are true, and you should preserve them.

But reject gradually, without fear or hesitation, everything which goes beyond the divine law. This is wholly and solely contained in the two commandments which include all the law and the prophets; the love of God above all things, and of the neighbour as yourself. To love the neighbour in all ways, and under all forms and circumstances, according to the material, moral, and intellectual order—whether he be known or unknown, friend or enemy—implies, according to these commandments, that every one must be, and will be, rewarded according to his works.

The clergy of every religion are strongly attached to it, and are interested in upholding it, and consequently those of every sect will cry "Anathema" against this profession of faith which proceeds from Christ, and which undermines the sects; for the time is not far distant when men, notwithstanding the external religions which still keep them divided, will obey this divine law, and march forward as friends and brothers, upholding a banner inscribed with the motto, "Love and Charity."

Digitized by Google

But let the clergy talk and anathematize, for what can their dogmas, traditions, and ceremonies effect against the will of the Lord, and the progressive work of his Christ?

Do they speak to the soul? Judging by the majority, and not speaking of any in particular, we may say that in general they do not; for men leave their respective churches as bad as when they entered them.

Consequently, they only appeal to the senses, but the senses grow wearied and blunted; and what remains then? In general (still speaking of the majority of cases, and not specially applying our words to any in particular) their hearers become automata, kneeling, praying, and singing at stated intervals. There are men and children without faith, and old men without hope, who leave the churches, taking with them all the vices which they brought with them when they entered; vices springing from pride or selfishness, whether avarice, idleness, anger, intemperance, sensuality, luxury, slander, calumny, incredulity, materialism, intolerance, or fanaticism.

These are the false stones which must be rejected, for the building crumbles down upon all the lies which uphold it.

The only true corner-stones are faith in God and the practice of charity; let these be sound and lasting.

What is the exact meaning of the words (v. 21), "Before he was conceived in the womb?"

Before he was committed to the care of Mary, whom men regarded as his mother.

The expressions in v. 21 resulted from the beliefs which (as we have explained in § 14) were intended to be temporarily received. In the eyes of men Jesus was considered, during his earthly mission, to be the son of Mary and Joseph; but after the completion of his mission he was regarded as miraculously born of the Virgin Mary, through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Digitized by Google

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSES 25-35.

Song of Simeon.

(25) And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. (26) And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. (27) And he came by the Spirit unto the Temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the law, (28) He took him in his arms, and blessed God, and said, (29) Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, (30) For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, (31) Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: (32) A light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. (33) And Joseph and his mother wondered at those things which were spoken concerning him. (34) And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother, Behold, this child is preordained for the calamity and awakening of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (35) And a sword shall pierce through thy own soul; that the designs of many hearts may be revealed.

§ 41. Simeon was a just and God-fearing man, and lived in expectation of the advent of the promised Messiah.

You are aware that such expressions as "the Holy Spirit was in him," it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, "driven by the Spirit," &c., are Hebrew modes of expression, as we have already explained (§ 9).

The guardian angel of Simeon inspired him (or, as you would say, instilled a presentiment into his mind) that he would not die till he had seen the Lord's Christ; and this inspiration caused him to feel an intuitive conviction of its truth.

He was also inspired by his guardian angel to visit the Temple, and while still under the same influence he took the child Jesus in his arms, proclaiming him to be the expected Saviour, and then pronounced the words recorded in the text.

Have not the prophetic words of Simeon been accomplished, and are they not still in course of fulfilment?

Since Jesus was exposed on the cross, both for the present and for the future, until the accomplishment of the ages, in sight of all nations, has he not enlightened them, and will he not still continue to do so? Has he not been exposed

Digitized by Google

to the view of all nations, through his apostles and disciples, until your own days? Will he not continue to be brought before all men more and more, by the Spirit of Truth during the new era which is now commencing, until the light of which he is the personification, shall shine over all?

The words "Glory of Israel," when interpreted in their real sense, refer to the pride of the Jews in having been the nation among whom the Christ was sent.

This portion of the song refers to future ages; not merely to a period later than that when they were spoken, but later than your own. This is easily intelligible; for, when the whole earth shall be enlightened, the Jews will be happy in having been the first with whom the light was deposited; and although they began by putting it under a bushel, they will nevertheless experience a lively feeling of gratitude. The time will come, but we must wait.

The words, "This child is preordained for the calamity and awakening of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against," also allude, in their hidden spiritual sense, to the religious quarrels respecting the origin and nature and spiritual position of Jesus, as well as to his power and authority, and especially to the opposition to his teaching exhibited by most of the principal men in Israel. These religious quarrels began at that period; they have lasted until your own age, and will not cease for some time longer. Jesus has been a cause of calamity to many others besides the people of Israel; and he will continue to be so for a time. All those who reject his true law, and his true word which is contained in the widest extension of the two commandments, "Love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourself," will find him to be the stumbling-block against which they dash themselves.

Those who reject the true law of Jesus because they have misunderstood it, and frequently because they have not been properly instructed in it, cannot be adjudged so guilty as those who understood its real sense, but misrepresented it to others in order to keep them under their yoke.

But Jesus will ever be a cause of awakening for those

Digitized by Google

who walk in darkness, and turn joyfully towards the light. They are awakened, because they no longer remain in the state of degradation which alienates them from the "heaven" to which you aspire, but have entered on a path of progress which will lead them rapidly towards it. They might before have been called "dead," for their existence had no other goal but the grave; but they are now "awakened," and have burst the gates of the tomb to speed towards their Creator with all the energies of their love, faith, and perseverance.

The words of Simeon to Mary, "a sword shall pierce through thy own soul; that the designs of many hearts may be revealed," refer to the "death" of Jesus, which was, humanly speaking, a great grief to Mary. It also gave rise to the profession of the faith of some of his disciples, and to the desertion of others.

Although Mary was convinced of the brilliant future of "the Son of God," the "Saviour of the World;" she suffered humanly on account of the belief which she held respecting the "death" of the "Son" whom she had nursed in her arms, and followed in his progress, and whose actions she had admired and reverenced.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSES 36–40.

Anna the Prophetess.

(36) And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity. (37) And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, and she departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and prayers night and day. (38) And she standing up at that instant gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of him to all those who were waiting for redemption at Jerusalem. (39) And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. (40) And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

§ 42. Anna was a speaking and hearing medium. She was called a prophetess, because she was enabled to predict certain events, under the influence of the Spirits of the Lord. She was an exalted spirit, with highly developed

Digitized by Google

medianimic powers, like the prophets who appeared in Israel.

The prophets were regarded by the people as inspired by the Most High himself; but in truth, they were mediums. The words of Anna were similar to those of Simeon.

Verse 40 should be left in the place where it stands, although it has no relation to the foregoing prophecies, but refers to the period subsequent to the presentation in the Temple.

Jesus, being different from your humanity, had no childhood like yours. His body was only an almost material perisprit, which assumed a human appearance to the eyes of men; but as its nature was purely perispritic, the spirit which it enclosed was always free, and the body consequently obeyed its influence in a manner which was always superior to anything that could be hoped for in the most highly developed child.

You are told that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." That is a human commentary upon the narrative. The body of Jesus being always apparently human, appeared to men to grow, and his intelligence to develop, though more rapidly than in other children. But in the eyes of God he always remained the same; a devoted spirit labouring to accomplish his mission.

You may trace the progress and development of man in little children. Do not some, even at a very early age, appear to be stronger and more intelligent than the others? Would you not have it so with him who was only a child in appearance; and is it not intelligible that his first steps on earth should be marked with a peculiar seal, like the rest of his life?

"And the grace of God was upon him;" because in him everything was pure and holy, and he was, therefore, equally pure and holy in his words and actions. His early "childhood" (in human eyes) was, as you may well suppose, free from the faults and weaknesses of your infancy. He was perfect from his origin; and this naturally excited astonishment and admiration.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. II.—VERSES 1–12.

The Magi.

(1) Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, in the days of Herod the King, behold Magi came from Eastern countries to Jerusalem. (2) Saying, where is He that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to do homage to him. (3) When Herod the King had heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. (4) And he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people, and demanded of them where the Christ should be born. (5) And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa; for it is written thus through the prophet, (6) And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not at all the least among the leaders of Judah, for a leader shall come forth from thee, who shall tend my people Israel. (7) Then Herod called the wise men secretly, and inquired of them the exact time of the appearance of the star. (8) And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I also may go and do homage to him. (9) When they had heard the king, they departed, and lo, the star which they had seen in the east, went before them, till it came and stood above where the young child was. (10) And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. (11) And when they went into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and they fell down, and did homage to him, and when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to him, gold and frankincense and myrrh. (12) And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back into their own country by another way.

§ 43. The Magi did not visit the stable at Bethlehem, nor did they do homage to the "child" when he was laid in the manger. Their visit did not take place before the circumcision and purification, but some time afterwards, as you may perceive by the command to destroy the children up to two years of age; for Herod issued this mandate in accordance with the time that he had carefully inquired of the Magi.

Mary was to remain at Bethlehem till the Magi had visited and done homage to the "child." All these events were prearranged, and were accomplished by spiritual influence and agency.

You call such meetings and coincidences accidental, because you do not know their causes; but they frequently take place among you in a similar manner.

Joseph and Mary often visited Matthias, Joseph's brother, at Bethlehem.

Digitized by Google

Their guardian spirits inspired them with the idea of going there when it was necessary for the Magi to find them, and the Magi came to the house of Matthias to do homage to the "child" Jesus, and to offer him their gifts.

But how were the Magi led to come from the East to Jerusalem, to ask where he who was born "King of the Jews" was to be found; and how did they know that the star which they had seen related to his birth? How were they led to follow the star to do homage to him, and what was this star?

The Magi received a revelation from their guardian spirits in a dream that a messenger of the Great Being had descended on earth to be "King of the Jews," and to redeem the human race. They were also informed that they would be led to the "child" by his star, which they would see in the sky, and that, if they followed the "star," it would conduct them to the divine messenger. Every one receives a revelation in such terms as are most suitable to him.

The Magi thought that every human existence was governed by a planet; and consequently supposed that this "star" was a planet created to control the destiny of Jesus, and expressly sent to announce the event, and to guide them; whereas they believed that other men were born and died under the influence of already existing planets, each of which might rule the destinies of thousands of individuals.

You know that the ancients believed that every one was born under a good or evil star, for this notion has lasted a long time. The learned men of the period based this idea upon the belief that the planet under whose influence a man was born, radiated fluids which were either favourable to genius, wealth, happiness, and prosperity, or the contrary, according as its influence was good or evil. If you open any old book on alchemy, necromancy, or astrology, you will see the important influence attributed, sometimes in perfect sincerity, to the planets, which move on their ascending path towards progress, like everything else, for every created object is perfectible.

Do not wonder that the Magi should have formed such

Digitized by Google

an idea of the "star" which was to guide them, for they supposed it to be a planet guiding them intelligently to a special locality.* Their confidence in the powerful will of the Lord predominated over their reason; and they supposed that the star obeyed a given order, as the servant obeys his master. But we do not say that this was really so, and we will now explain the nature of the light which they supposed to be a star.

Some sceptics, who proudly claim to know everything and yet are very ignorant, deny spiritual and medianimic phenomena, and maintain that this "star" was an astrological fable. Those who only understand mathematical results, and estimate everything by what they can weigh and measure, must speak thus.

The light which appeared to the Magi like a star had nothing in common with the stars which are scattered through space. Cannot a guardian angel appear to man under any luminous form which he deems fitting? Is the dim eye of matter even able to distinguish the light flowing from a fluidic source from the light surrounding the worlds which revolve in space?

Spiritists should understand how the perisprit of a superior spirit might be made luminous to human eyes by the concentration and modification of fluids, under the form of a star. It was not a star which the Magi beheld, for everything in space obeys the laws of universal harmony. A star is a world, and could not remove from its fixed centre of gravity to travel in space like a torch in the hand of a guide.

You know that every effect manifesting intelligence must proceed from an intelligent cause. The Magi were guided by a superior spirit, who was appointed to lead them to pay homage to the Saviour of mankind. He manifested himself by a luminous fluidic appearance like a star, as the Magi called it.

The star shone in their eyes, but their eyes were of flesh. Do you not allow for optical effects? Do you see the

* Plato attributed a spherical form to the Gods. (Transl.)

Digitized by Google

worlds that surround you as they really are, at the distance at which they are placed? Would not the distance and the shining light of the form and size of a star moving through the surrounding air, be sufficient to deceive the eyes of men who, though learned as regards their own age, were yet very far from your present knowledge, and possessed none of these instruments which have now reached such great perfection, and will yet be vastly improved?

Some sceptics have jestingly remarked that the Magi could only travel at night, because the stars do not shine in broad daylight. Not so; the Magi travelled by day, for they rested at night like you, and passed the necessary time in sleep.

Do not those learned men who have invented and who use telescopes by day, know that, under certain optical conditions, it is just as easy to see the stars in the sunlight as at night?

We ask these objectors whether it would not be easy to modify the sight of the Magi so that they could perceive a pale luminosity notwithstanding the brightness of day? Do not equally extraordinary phenomena, which you admit without well understanding them, cause human eyes to fulfil the functions of the microscope?

But let us return to the main point. The star which led the Magi was not one of those which stud the firmament, but a concentration of luminous fluids, under the form of a twinkling star, and changing its lustre so that the Magi, who were seeing mediums, could distinguish the light. An optical effect caused this travelling light to appear to twinkle like the stars on a clear night.

We come to help you to explain what is called a mystery in human language, but only to help to explain what you are really incapable of understanding. Use your science and reason to discover what they can.

The Magi were first led to Jerusalem that they might follow the course which the Lord had appointed.

Herod was to be informed of the "birth" of the "King of the Jews," that he might call an assembly of the chief

Digitized by Google

priests and scribes of the people, who consulted the prophets, and fixed Bethlehem of Judah as the exact place where the "child" whom the Magi sought should be born; the Christ, who was foretold as the leader of the people of Israel.

Nothing takes place without a reason. "The "birth" of the "child" Jesus in a humble station was to be remembered to prepare for his appearance among men, and this was effected by the events consequent upon the journey of the Magi to Jerusalem, and their visit to Bethlehem.

We will now explain what we meant by saying (§§ 33 and 35) that the Magi were more anxious to verify a doubtful event than confident in the word of the angel.

The Magi believed in the existence and manifestation of spirits, and communicated with them by medianimic methods, like yourselves. But the teachings they received were proportioned to the development of their intelligence, and to the needs of the age. Medianimity existed among them as among you, and so much was revealed to each as his organization or his degree of advancement, study, and experience fitted him to receive.

They were acquainted with magnetism and somnambulism, with the disengagement of the soul in the somnambulic state, and during sleep, and with its power of communicating with spirits in this free state, either under magnetic influence, or in a dream during sleep.

When they remembered the dream on awaking, they were in doubt whether it was a vision (or spiritual revelation of events which were foretold to them, as about to be accomplished), or only a dream, or lying vision.

This doubt was not dispelled till they saw the "star" beginning to move before them, when they followed it to Jerusalem, where it stopped.

They still doubted, when the chief priests and scribes asserted that Bethlehem was the place where this celestial messenger of the Great Being, who was to tend the "people of Israel," and was born "King of the Jews," should be sought for.

Digitized by Google

After receiving Herod's orders, they felt great joy when they saw the "star" appear, and begin to move before them again.

But their faith was not fully established until the "star" stopped above the house, and having found the "child" with Mary, they prostrated themselves before him, and did homage to him as the messenger of the Great Being, who had descended upon earth to regenerate the human race; after which they opened their treasures, and offered him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh.

§ 44. What are the bodies called "shooting stars?"

This is beyond the limits of the work which we have caused you to undertake. Shooting stars are not worlds with a fixed centre of gravity, but condensed and incandescent fluids seeking the centre of attraction, where they must unite to complete their combination, and form a planet. Our previous remarks related to organized worlds, occupying their own centre of gravity. Again, our words are not inconsistent with the displacement of each planet (as we shall explain afterwards in speaking of the ascending course of your own towards perfection) during its progressive wanderings, because ages may effect, in accordance with natural law, what could not take place during the limited period of a human journey without disturbance. Thirdly, the "shooting stars," or masses of incandescent fluids, move with the speed of thought in seeking their goal, while the "star" of the Magi moved before them with the slow and regular progress of men on a journey, and thus acted intelligently as their guide.

MATTHEW, CHAP. II.—VERSES 13–18.

Flight into Egypt—Slaughter of the Innocents.

(13) And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be there until I bring thee word, for Herod is about to seek for the young child, to destroy him. (14) And when he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt. (15) And was there until the death of Herod, that the word of the Lord, through the prophet, might be

Digitized by Google

fulfilled saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. (16) Then Herod, perceiving that he was mocked by the Magi, was exceedingly angry, and sent forth and slew all the children in Bethlehem, and throughout the neighbourhood, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had accurately inquired of the Magi. (17) Then was fulfilled the word of Jeremiah the prophet, saying, (18) A voice was heard in Rama, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

§ 45. If you examine into events, you will always perceive the finger of God directing them, and providing for the future of the righteous. The Magi had informed Herod that they supposed that the child might be about two years old, according to the time when they received the spiritual revelation, the period fixed for their setting out, and the time which they spent on the journey.

Herod ordered all the children of two years and under to be destroyed, including even new-born infants, because he did not see the Magi again, and feared there might be some mistake, and preferred rather to sacrifice a greater number of victims than to miss the child whom he wished to destroy. As the calculation of the Magi was only approximate, they could not give him positive information. This uncertainty prepared for the events which followed.

After the Magi had left Bethlehem, the angel of the Lord warned Joseph in a dream, and sent him into Egypt, with Mary and the "child."

The children sacrificed by the cruelty of Herod were not lost victims. The Lord, in his benevolent foresight, had allowed this incarnation of nearly purified spirits, that their premature death might complete their experiences on earth, in place of expiation.

The parents, whom you regard as innocent, were not forgotten, for the grief which they suffered was a trial which they needed. Everything is always foreseen and provided for by the infinite wisdom of God.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. II.—VERSES 19–23.

The Return from Egypt.

(19) But when Herod was dead, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, (20) Arise and take the young child and his mother, and take them into the land of Israel, for they who sought the young child's life are dead. (21) And he rose up, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. (22) But when he heard that Archelaus reigned in Judæa in the place of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither, and being warned in a dream, he turned aside to the parts of Galilee. (23) And came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that the word spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled: He shall be called a Nazarene.

§ 46. When Joseph received the first announcement from the angel, he intended to settle in Jerusalem or the neighbourhood, but the fear of attracting attention to the "child" prevented him. The angel again appeared to him in a dream, and as he was advised, he withdrew to Nazareth, in Galilee.

We call your special attention to this, that you may plainly understand that nothing takes places without the will of the Lord, although human means are always employed to attain a human end. Joseph might have been sent straight to Nazareth, but the mind of man would not have been satisfied with this fact. God, therefore, in order to fulfil a prophecy, first sent Joseph far from his home, and then turned him aside from his proposed route, and sent him to Nazareth. It was God who inspired Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, with fear for the safety of the "child;" and it is ever God who guides those who are chosen to point the path to the heavens to mankind.

LUKE, CHAP. II.—VERSES 41–52.

Jesus in the Temple with the Teachers. His apparent human Life explained up to the time of the commencement of his Ministry.

(41) And his parents went to Jerusalem every year, to the feast of the Passover, (42) And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. (43) And when they had fulfilled the days, when they returned, the boy Jesus remained be-

Digitized by Google

hind in Jerusalem, and Joseph and his mother knew it not. (44) But they, supposing him to be in the company, went a day's journey, and sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances. (45) And as they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem in search of him. (46) And it came to pass that after three days, they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions. (47) And all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and answers. (48) And when they saw him, they were amazed, and his mother said to him, Son, why hast thou treated us thus? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. (49) And he said to them, Why did ye seek me? did ye not know that I must be about my Father's business? (50) And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. (51) And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them, and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. (52) And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

§ 47. The facts speak for themselves. The existence of Jesus was to be divided into three distinct periods. The first period extended from his "birth," including all the preceding and subsequent events, up to the time of his appearance in the Temple among the teachers. This period includes the promises of redemption, according to the current interpretation of the prophecies of the ancient Law. The second period was that of his appearance in the Temple, as a boy of twelve years old, on the day of the celebration of the Passover, when large crowds had assembled in Jerusalem. This prepared for the announcement of the divine mission of Jesus, when the time had come. The third period was that of the preaching of Jesus, guiding men to the course of life which they should follow.

It was necessary that the life of Jesus should thus be divided, in reference to the past, present, and future, and Jesus therefore remained at Jerusalem, to fulfil the second phase of his existence.

Those who know nothing, and admit that they know nothing of the "childhood" of Jesus, criticize these events as being morally improbable, although they do not understand them, and cannot explain either the motive or the object of the great preparatory work of human regeneration. Those who have attempted to explain the retired and unnoticed life of Jesus, by humanizing his actions, have not explained how he could so far withdraw himself, exposed as

Digitized by Google

he was to public observation, that so very few human actions are recorded of him. The only ones which remain are those recorded by each of the Evangelists, according to his share of the narrative as an historical medium, for the instruction of the present and the future. Each represented these events under medianimic influence in a manner appropriate to the age and to the state of intelligence of the time.

You are aware that the state of intelligence and the necessities of the period did not allow the real origin of the "child" to be known. That period was preparatory to the present new era of Spiritism, and this knowledge was reserved for the New Revelation, which we bring you at the appointed time in the name of the Spirit of Truth, and by command of the Lord.

You also know that Jesus was first to be regarded as clothed with humanity like one of the old prophets; and subsequently, when his earthly mission was ended, and the revelations of the angel had been published, as a God "miraculously" incarnated. This was due to the human interpretations of the angelic revelation, which prepared the way for the reign of the letter, temporarily required as a means and condition of progress. Jesus was then regarded as corporeally a man like yourselves, and spiritually a God; a God-man.

The spiritual origin of Jesus is revealed to you now that the time has come for the letter which killeth to be succeeded by the Spirit which giveth life. Now that what has remained secret ought to be known, we are commissioned to tell you the nature of the apparent human life of Jesus from the time that he appeared on your planet, until the period when he entered upon his public mission on the banks of the Jordan, as a man of thirty years of age.

Everything in the life of Jesus was simply apparent. His life was "human" in the eyes of men, but under illusory conditions, because all, like Mary and Joseph, were to believe in his "humanity." Although he had clothed himself with a tangible perisprit, it was a purely perispritic body, inaccessible to the necessities of your material existence.

Digitized by Google

When Jesus appeared to be an infant at the breast of Mary, the superior spirits who surrounded him turned the course of the milk by a very simple fluidic action, and as the "infant," had no need of it, it was returned directly to the system of the mother.

There is nothing in this which need surprise you. Do you not know that a chemist can combine or decompose at will a compound fluid, by restoring its proper nature to each heterogeneous element? Can you not admit that the fluidic action of superior spirits, who know all the secrets of your human life and organization, might thus decompose milk, and restore each of its constituent elements to their source? Although sceptics may shrug their shoulders in derision, it does not alter the facts. Does not the knowledge which chemists have acquired of synthesis and analysis suffice to explain a fact to you that will be confirmed by the experience of the properties of fluids, which you will shortly acquire?

If a magnetizer wishes to stay the flow of milk for the good of his patient, is not the flow arrested? And can you imagine that the influence of spirits on man is less than your own? *

Nor need you wonder that Mary's breast should have yielded milk, for this secretion may result from various causes which we need not here enumerate. There are many instances of this, both in human beings and animals; independently of maternity. This need be no difficulty in the face of well-known facts; and in Mary's case, the blood was lactefied by spiritual magnetism and fluidic agency.

At that period, the mother suckled the infant as long as she could, often until the child was two or three years old, and had long been able to run alone, for the habits of the people of that age and country were very different from yours, and they lived much more outside than inside their houses. As soon as the children were able to walk,

* Mr. Braid's experiments will be found in any good treatise on physiology. (Transl.)

Digitized by Google

they ran about alone or in company as they pleased, often supporting themselves to a large extent on wild fruits and honey. During this period of the life of Jesus, everything took place under the easiest conditions conformable with the perispritic nature of his visible body. Jesus was reared like other children of his age. He was precocious, and spoke and walked sooner than others; but he was regarded by all as the son of Mary and Joseph. He was in the habit of wandering in the fields at a very early period, either alone or with other children. At a later period, he wandered about alone, avoiding observation; and never asked for food when he returned to his home. He was supposed to have fed on fruit and wild honey like his little companions, and as Mary felt no uneasiness about what it was needful for her to provide for the child, no one else offered him food. Without knowing why, Mary did not feel that it was necessary for her to watch over her son like an ordinary mother, for she instinctively felt that he had no need of her solicitude. Yet this does not imply that she was a careless or indifferent mother, but only that she abstained from useless cares and anxieties under the guidance of friendly guardian spirits. Consequently Jesus was often absent from his human home, even when quite a little child. He sometimes disappeared just when Mary was preparing a meal, and let the time pass by, and when Mary and Joseph looked for him, or waited for him, he said to them, "You have no need to be uneasy, or to look for me." When they entreated him to share the meal with them, he would say, "I have no need of anything;" and it was always supposed that he had fed on wild fruits and honey.

Thus it happened that Jesus began to absent himself as much as the customs of the country permitted a child who was extremely advanced for his age. These periods of absence gradually became longer and longer, both to accustom his "parents" to them, and to prevent their feeling any anxiety about his sustenance.

We have already said that Mary's guardian spirits disposed her to sympathize with the habits of Jesus. Joseph was

Digitized by Google

also subject to the same influences, and they both felt that he had other aspirations and tendencies than those around him; though this did not lead them to think that he was different from what he appeared to be.

They did not regard the habits of Jesus as more than singular to human eyes. He loved solitude, and did not care to associate with children of his own age.

His "parents" considered that he lived frugally. They thought that he preferred to live on wild fruits and honey, like many shepherds, and his health did not seem to suffer from it. They supposed that the few opportunities which he had of thus procuring food were sufficient for him. We do not say that Jesus obtained food thus, but only that his parents supposed so; and even when he appeared to them to take food, he did not partake of a regular meal; for his absences did not take place at fixed intervals.

Mary was not surprised at her son's mode of life, when she recollected what she and Joseph both regarded as his miraculous origin.

Their minds were both so impressionable, their faith was so strong, and their moral elevation so high, that they were very easily influenced by the inspirations of the superior spirits, who impressed them with the desire of not attempting to oppose or to interfere with his mode of life.

For some years before Jesus visited Jerusalem, he had thus absented himself from home for one, or several days together, saying, "I am going to pray." Sometimes he remained at home for several days, but without appearing to take any food; for his perispritic, though apparently human body required no human nourishment, like yours.

The Hebrews saw nothing surprising in a man abstaining from food for one or several days. The most zealous among them sometimes abstained from all food for three days together.

The medium is inclined to deny what she cannot understand; but if she reflects she will remember an instance in her own family of what may take place even in your own days, when good living and luxurious habits have weakened the

Digitized by Google

vital powers.* Could not strong and sober men, inured and accustomed to it from their youth, fast if they so desired? Remember the customs of the modern Arabs, as well as those of the ancient Hebrews.

We will now, having regard to the perispritic nature of the apparently human body of Jesus (compare §§ 14 and 32), explain the appearance of Jesus in the Temple among the teachers, and tell you what became of him during the three days that he remained at Jerusalem.

Joseph and his brother brought Jesus to the Temple as one of the descendants of David, according to his genealogy and the descent of his tribe.

When the Passover was over, Joseph and Mary set out on their return journey, and you are told that Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem without their knowing it, for they thought that he was with the rest of the company. They travelled on for a day, and sought for him among their kinsfolk and friends, and as they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him.

Is it reasonable to regard these events as morally improbable, and to say that it is incredible that when Mary and Joseph arrived at the capital at a time when it was crowded with strangers, they should have lost sight of Jesus, whom they considered to be a boy of twelve years old; and that they should then have set out on their return, and travelled for a whole day before they discovered that he was not with them?

The apparent moral impossibility only arises from ignorance.

We have told you that Jesus had already led a life at variance with your customs and habits, for some years.

His parents were accustomed to his contemplative and

* During the epidemic of Asiatic cholera in Paris in 1832, M. Bréard, the father of the medium, abstained from all food for four days, fearing lest it might bring on an attack; and, nevertheless, he was very well and attended to his business all the time.

The ascetics among the early Christians frequently abstained from food altogether for several days.

According to Sophronius (ch. cxlvii.) the Pope, St. Leo, prayed and fasted for four days at the tomb of the Apostle Peter.

Digitized by Google

somewhat outlandish life, and consequently did not watch over him with the strict supervision that you exercise towards your children.

Why are parents so watchful of their children? Surely on account of the weakness, heedlessness, and ignorance of the young creatures who are entrusted to their care; and if the children should once exhibit sufficient reason, intellect, and moral development to secure them from the dangers to which they are exposed by their youth, the parents would desist from an unnecessary and troublesome supervision.

You are told that Joseph and Mary believed that Jesus was with some of their relations and friends. There was a large company wandering about in the open country, for you must not suppose that they followed a beaten track, like your high roads; it was only when they had asked one friend after another about Jesus, and found that no one had seen him, that they began to search for him; and as there had been no halt during the day for refreshment, they did not ascertain positively that no one had seen him, until the evening. Most of the company (and Joseph and Mary among them) subsisted principally on the wild fruit of the trees and hedges during their journey.

When Joseph and Mary returned to Jerusalem, they found Jesus seated among the teachers in the Temple, listening to them, and asking them questions. But Mary did not say, "My son, how could you live alone in a town where you were an unknown stranger? Who has entertained you, and where did you rest and sleep?" Instead of this, she merely expressed the uneasiness that his absence had caused herself and Joseph, because he remained alone at Jerusalem, when he ought to have returned to Nazareth with them.

Mary did not refrain from asking "her son" what had become of him during these three days because she knew that his nature was different from her own, but because she knew that his mode of existence was different from those of other children, as the experience of several years had taught her. She had known him abstain altogether from food for

Digitized by Google

one or several days, when he was at home, or to be absent at irregular intervals for several days together.

Those who know nothing of the spiritual origin of Jesus, and the perispritic nature of his body, may ask, "What became of Jesus during those three days? Where did this child of twelve years old pass the night? for he cannot have wandered about alone."

Such questions naturally occur to those who take Jesus for a man like themselves; although those who have studied Oriental languages and habits know that men, women, and children, often sleep out of doors, wrapped only in a mantle.

After what we have told you of the origin of Christ, and the perispritic nature of his fluidic body, you can understand that the boy had no occasion to trouble himself about seeking for a lodging.

Those who ask these questions should do so with a full consciousness of their own ignorance and with a desire for instruction, and not with that short-sighted incredulity which denies both spirit-manifestations, the Gospel revelation, and the new revelation which reveals the secrets of the other world, the connection between the visible and invisible, and the means of intellectual and moral progress, through knowledge, charity, and love.

During those three days, Jesus entered the court of the Temple with the crowd, and left it with them when it was closed. As soon as he had left the Temple, and was out of sight of men, he laid aside his tangible fluidic body and the clothes which covered it, which were entrusted to spirits who placed them beyond human ken. He then returned to the superior regions where he watched over your planet as its protecting and governing spirit, from the height of celestial splendours, as he does at present.

When the Temple was opened, he reappeared among men, resuming his tangible perisprit and dress, which made him appear human to their eyes.

Mary and Joseph did not understand the answer of Jesus, because they thought, for the moment, that he spoke

Digitized by Google

of his reputed father Joseph, and not of the Heavenly Father whose reign he came to prepare.

Those who object that the meaning of the words, "Did ye not know that I must be about my Father's business" must have been obvious to Mary and Joseph, because the angel had announced that Jesus was the "son of God," forget that they were clothed in flesh, and that their perceptions were necessarily obscured by the imperfection of their human faculties. As the habits of Jesus did not appear to be more than singular, nothing indicated his origin as extra-human. The impression made by the revelation and the succeeding events had gradually worn away. The expression "father," which they supposed to refer to Joseph, was the only thing which struck them for the moment, and they did not understand it; for everything is obscured by the flesh. Although the mode of existence of Jesus did not surprise Mary as much as Joseph, when she thought of the origin of her son, she often forgot it, especially as the nature of the child which had been announced to her was not to be made known at present.

It is not surprising that Mary and Joseph thought that Jesus referred to Joseph as his father, or that Mary should have said to Jesus, "My son, behold, thy *father* and I have sought thee sorrowing." Mary believed herself to be the mother of Jesus by an incarnation which was at once human and divine, or miraculous; and, consequently, Jesus called her his mother. Joseph was regarded by men as the father of Jesus, who had hitherto called him so. As the angel had directed Joseph to take Mary as his wife, Joseph knew that men were to regard him as the father of the child; indeed, the husband would be regarded as the father, in such a case, from the moment that he accepted the mother as his wife.

Joseph did not know how long this belief was intended to last; but Jesus had always addressed Joseph as his father; and consequently Mary thought that he spoke of him in the present instance.

This answer was the first allusion made by Jesus to his

Digitized by Google

mission, and he pronounced the words with reference both to the present and to the future.

You are told that Jesus was sitting amongst the teachers in the Temple, listening to them, and asking them questions; and that all who heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers.

Children of the age of twelve years (as Jesus then appeared to be) studied reading and tradition, and began to study the commentaries of the learned. They submitted their difficulties to their teachers; but it is incorrect to say that they never argued with the teachers in public. This sometimes happened, and the child was led into a public discussion, when he showed a great aptitude which might do honour to his master.

This took place in the case of Jesus; for although he was a stranger in Jerusalem, and not under the tuition of any master, he was not unknown when he sat among the teachers in the Temple; for Joseph and his brother had introduced him as a descendant of David.

He was permitted to speak in the Temple at a time when Joseph and his brother were no longer with him, although they had introduced him. He was first urged to reply to the teachers, who were ready to question him themselves; and afterwards he sat down and joined in the discussion, instructing them in his turn.

Does it not sometimes happen that although you do not usually listen to children, you listen attentively to those who seem to be more intelligent and advanced than usual at their age? And do you not think that when the people were amazed at the first replies of Jesus to the questions asked him, and at the first questions propounded by himself, he would have been urged to speak by the very persons who had entered into discussion with him?

The teachers knew that he was one of the descendants of David, but it is not unnecessary to add that even if they had suspected his identity with the child whom the Magi had announced, it would have been difficult for them to establish it, for they did not know exactly in what family of

Digitized by Google

the tribe he was born, and the massacre of the infants had put an end to their present expectation of the Messiah.

After the public discussion in the Temple, and his reply to Mary, Jesus returned to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph, and dwelt there until he commenced his public mission on the banks of the Jordan, when he appeared to be a man of thirty years of age. Joseph died some time after their return to Nazareth, for his mission was ended. During these eighteen years, the apparent human life of Jesus passed in manual labour, and in the practice of love; that is, in exercising goodness and charity towards all around him.

He was thought to lead a retired life, and to love solitude; but he fulfilled all the ostensible duties of man in reference to his relations and neighbours, by comforming (to human eyes) to the law of labour. He lived under this as the greatest and justest law among men, although so many of you revolt under the burden.

Jesus lived the exemplary life which he came to preach, but his outward life was not like yours. His apparent taste for solitude prevented his being obliged to submit to all the requirements of ordinary life; and Mary understood and encouraged this tendency, under the influence of her guardian spirits. Jesus fulfilled all the apparent duties of mankind, by practising manual labour, and exercising goodness and charity; but he "absented" himself at other times, and was supposed by Mary and others to divide his time between his human duties and prayer; and he never appeared to take any refreshment either at home or elsewhere. All that we have said of his life previous to his attaining the apparent age of twelve years, likewise applies to the subsequent period until the commencement of his public mission. When Jesus was believed to be absent or in retirement, he disappeared and returned to the superior regions where he watches over your earth as its protecting and governing spirit.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN,
With the concurrence of the Apostles.

Digitized by Google

§ 48. How do you explain the anxiety which Mary and Joseph felt when they found that Jesus had not accompanied them on their re turn from Jerusalem?

§ 48. As Mary and Joseph were clothed in flesh, their human faculties were necessarily imperfect. They thought that Jesus lived an ordinary life, because his actions merely appeared singular as compared with those of others. Nothing specially stamped his nature as superhuman; and the first impression produced by the revelation and the subsequent events gradually wore away; and though his mode of life did not surprise Mary, when she thought of his origin, her intelligence was often at fault.

Jesus appeared to Mary and Joseph to be clothed in a body as exposed to accident or death as their own, and that the angel had directed Joseph to carry the young child to Egypt to save him from his enemies. When they found that the boy was missing, and had stayed at Jerusalem instead of returning with them, they remembered that revelation, and the accompanying events; and it is not surprising if this very recollection made them uneasy.

Mary and Joseph supposed that the flight into Egypt was a precaution necessary to preserve the life of the child. But after what we have told you of the origin of Christ, you can perceive that no act of man could have affected his life, on account of the perispritic nature of his body. But even had any real danger existed, God could (humanly speaking) have adopted other means for his preservation; and the real object of the journey was to remove Jesus, that his existence might be forgotten, in order that his mission could be carried out in the desired manner. Previous to the commencement of his public mission, Jesus was only intended to appear among men at certain intervals; for if he had always lived in public, his teaching would not have produced a sufficiently profound impression on his hearers.

§ 49. How could Jesus appear to men as a new-born infant, and grow up like any other child, thus apparently passing through the ordinary stages of human life?

§ 49. Why should it seem incredible to you that the perispritic body of Jesus should exhibit the same apparent pro-

Digitized by Google

perties as your bodies, to human eyes, and that the fluids composing it should develop in a similar manner?

We could not give you further explanations on this point without going into details as to the nature of fluids, which it is at present impossible to enter upon.

But you know that even an inferior spirit of your own order can cause the perisprit which constitutes his life and individuality to assume all appearances, and even tangible forms instantaneously, provided only that he is able to avail himself of the animalized fluids requisite for the purpose. Admit that this condition is unnecessary in the case of a superior spirit, who is able to assimilate the animalized fluids diffused through the atmosphere, and you cannot then see any difficulty in his being able at will to expand the fluids of the perisprit which he has formed and rendered tangible, so as to cause it to pass through human phases of development in the eyes of men. Jesus is a perfect and pre-eminently pure spirit, and his powerful will drew around him the materials required for the proper accomplishment of his mission.

We have explained to you in § 14 that Jesus formed a perisprit for himself fitted to retain a lengthened tangibility, and humanized by the aid of the surrounding fluids which enter into the composition of your own bodies. He could quit and re-assume this perisprit at will, and it was so far humanized that he could cause it to assume the appearance of the successive stages of human life; but in the eyes of God, Jesus was always a devoted spirit, working at the task assigned him.

§ 50. What is the meaning of v. 51—"His mother kept all these things in her heart"?

Mary received more and more confirmations of the mission of Jesus, addressed to her mind and intelligence.

The most striking events in the life of Jesus previous to the commencement of his public mission, took place during his visit to Jerusalem. The answer which he gave to Mary prepared her to understand that his parents' care was un-

Digitized by Google

necessary. Jesus likewise wished to remind them of his origin, which they considered as "divine" and "miraculous," and to lead them to understand the character and object of his mission.

MATTHEW, CHAP. III.—VERSES 1–6. MARK, CHAP. I. VERSES 1–5. LUKE, CHAP. III.—VERSES 1–6.

Preaching of John—Baptism.

Matt. iii. (1) And in those days, came John the Baptist, preaching in the desert of Judæa. (2) And saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand. (3) For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, A voice of one crying in the desert, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (4) And he, John, had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his food was locusts and wild honey. (5) Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judæa, and all the region about Jordan. (6) And they were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

Mark i. (1) The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (2) As it is written in the prophets, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. (3) A voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (4) John was baptizing in the desert, and proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. (5) And all the country of Judæa, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem went out to him, and were all baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

Luke iii. (1) Now, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judæa; Herod, Tetrarch of Galilee; his brother Philip Tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis; and Lysanius the Tetrarch of Abilene; (2) Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the desert. (3) And he came into all the country round Jordan, proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. (4) As it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, saying, A voice of one crying in the desert, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (5) Every valley shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places into smooth roads. (6) And all flesh shall behold the salvation of God.

§ 51. Men make use of expressions which they understand and apply as well as they can. The word of God means the same thing as divine inspiration.

God does not communicate directly with men; for however pure an incarnated spirit may be, his fleshly covering forms an insuperable barrier between himself and the Divinity; but the Lord sends great spirits who are inspired

Digitized by Google

directly by himself, who communicate his wishes to men, as his agents.

God did not speak directly to John, any more than to the prophets, some of whom were clairvoyant and clair-audient mediums, while others were inspired in proportion to their elevation.

John received his inspiration in the desert, when the time fixed for the commencement of his mission had arrived. He was inspired by superior spirits, and came into all the country around Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance, and baptising in the river all who came to him, and confessed their sins.

John was a superior spirit, commissioned, as he said himself, to open up and to prepare the way for the light to shine more easily.

His semi-barbarous appearance, and unusual habits, drew all eyes upon him. His rough stern words led men to look seriously into their own hearts; and he prepared the paths of the Lord by preparing those of his Christ.

He was the leader of the flock, walking in front and ringing his bell, that all the lost sheep might know in what direction to turn for safety.

At that period, as well as in the early days of Christianity, confession was made publicly, and in a loud voice, before all men. It thus led to profound humility, for it needed great self-abnegation to dare to confess in public all the faults and errors, and basenesses which might spring up in the human heart. It also prevented relapses, for a man who knew that others were aware of his most secret thoughts and evil propensities, would always struggle to avoid the suspicion with which his least fault would be regarded. Such confessions were made publicly, in a loud voice; and God heard them *then*.

The words of Luke iii. v. 5, apply to the moral revolution which the doctrine of Jesus would effect, and will still accomplish, with the aid of Spiritism, and by the mission of the Spirit of Truth. The valleys shall be filled up, and

Digitized by Google

raised; and the mountains whose haughty heads would stay the march of progress, will be overturned, and the levelling influence will pass over all nature, raising the small and humbling the great, and giving each the share which is justly due to him; and "all flesh shall see the salvation of God." That is, every man who shall practise the law taught by Jesus, and his sublime morality, shall arrive at the goal.

§ 52. Herod was dead at this time. Why does Luke call his successor Herod too?

The name of Herod had a family application among the Jews at this period. It is here applied to Antipater, or Antipas.

MATTHEW, CHAP. III.—VERSES 7–12. MARK, CHAP. I. VERSES 6–8. LUKE, CHAP. III.—VERSES 7–18.

Accusations against the Pharisees.—Advice to the people, the taxgatherers, and the soldiers.—Testimony borne to Jesus Christ.

Matt. iii. (7) But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (8) Therefore produce fruits fitting for repentance. (9) And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father, for I say unto you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. (10) And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees, therefore every tree which does not produce good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. (11) I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I; I am not worthy to carry his sandals; he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire. (12) Whose winnowing-fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor, and gather his corn into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Mark i. (6) And John was clothed in camel's hair, and wore a leathern girdle about his loins, and his food was locusts and wild honey. (7) And he preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and loosen the strap of his sandals. (8) I indeed have baptized you in the water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

Luke iii. (7) He then said to the crowds who came forth to be baptized by him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? (8) Therefore produce fruits fitting for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham as our father;

Digitized by Google

for I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. (9) And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees; therefore every tree which does not yield good fruit is hewn down and cast down into the fire. (10) And the crowds asked him saying, What shall we do then? (11) And he answering, saith unto them, Let him that hath two coats give to him who hath none, and let him who hath food, do likewise. (12) And tax-gatherers also came to be baptized, and said to him, Teacher, what shall we do? (13) And he said to them, Exact no more than what is appointed for you. (14) And the soldiers likewise demanded of him saying, And what shall we do? And he said to them, Oppress no one, neither acuse any falsely, and be content with your allowance. (15) And as the people were in expectation, and all men considered in their hearts about John, whether he were the Christ or not, (16) John answered, saying to them all, I indeed baptize you in water, but one mightier than I cometh, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to loosen; he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire. (17) His winnowing-fan is in his hand, and he shall thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor, and will gather the corn into his barn, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. (18) And encouraging the people, he preached many other things to them.

§ 53. John proclaimed himself to be the forerunner of the Truth. Although he neither knew nor acknowledged anything of a previous incarnation, when he was questioned by the priests and Levites whom the Jews had sent from Jerusalem (John i. v. 15–28), it was only because matter limits spiritual intelligence. John was a superior spirit on a mission, like Joseph and Mary, but in accordance with the established laws of human incarnation, he had lost his memory, and lived in complete oblivion of his previous existence as the prophet Elijah. It was necessary that he should know nothing of these mysteries of the other world; he was well acquainted with the law of Moses; but his aspirations could not rise beyond the mission which he was appointed to fulfil.

He was in medianimic sympathy with the superior spirits, of whom he had himself been one. They aided and inspired him; and he possessed the intuition which guided him in all things, and the humility which all on earth should feel. He had the knowledge of what awaits the spirit on returning to its country, and the consciousness of his mission.

His mission was to prepare men for repentance by means of a symbol which should lead them to understand the purification which they needed. He washed their bodies to lead them to cleanse their hearts. He purified the outside to lead

Digitized by Google

them to purify their spirits; and in reply to their questions, he exhorted them to practise justice, love, and charity.

His mission was preparatory, and was to be completed by Christ. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, until he had assembled the people together to listen to the preaching of the truth.

The words of Matthew iii. v. 9–10, refer to all ages; to the period when John pronounced them, as well as to your own, and to the future.

The Hebrews recognized none as children of God except those who were subject to the law of Moses, just as many of the churches deny salvation to all who do not strictly obey their commands. The Hebrews regarded Abraham as the head of the family which was to inherit the kingdom of the heavens.

God designed these inspired words of his messenger to be distinctly understood to mean that all who come to him are equally his children. He says, "The children of Abraham will not enter into my kingdom if they are ungrateful, and misunderstand and pervert my precepts, for if they do so now, they will do the same in the future. But whoever hearkens to my voice, and enters into the straight path, and uproots the evil tree which brings forth evil fruit in his heart, leaving only the good seed which should make it fruitful; in short, whoever treads in my paths, is mine. The children of Abraham are not those who cry to me, Lord, Lord! but only those who do my will, whoever they are. All those whose hearts are pure are my children, and none but they shall enter into my kingdom."

You, Spiritists, know the hidden sense of those symbolical expressions, which were appropriate to the intelligence of the period, and were designed to impress it strongly: "Every tree which does not bear good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

The tree which does not bear good fruit is the incarnate spirit which has failed in its experiences, and which, after death, will be thrown into the fire. That is, it will be removed to the spiritual world, where it must first expiate its

Digitized by Google

offences by moral sufferings, appropriate and proportioned to the faults or crimes which it may have committed; and it will then be doomed to reincarnation, which will open to it the paths of expiation and reparation, being the appointed means both of purification and progress.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit means the assistance and inspiration of purified spirits, which is granted by Christ in the name of the Lord to those men who receive this inspiration medianimically, or even communicate with the purified spirits according to the conditions and degree of the medianimity which has been given them. Such assistance, inspiration, and communion, is only granted to earnest men to uphold and direct them in their experiences, or in their mission, to aid them to purify their spirits, and to advance in the path of moral and intellectual progress.

When Jesus sent down the Holy Spirit upon his disciples, he caused exalted spirits to approach them who could aid and uphold them in their hard and dangerous task. These manifested themselves by their luminous perisprit, under the appearance of "tongues of fire."

You are still under this influence at the present day, when you renounce your human passions, and live the life of God, and surrender yourselves wholly into his hands by practising work, humility, love and charity. You then attract to yourselves the protecting spirits of humanity; but beware of pride, for it is easy for even the most elevated to fall, and evil thoughts easily arise in the incarnate mind. You should therefore receive the spiritual light which is granted you to shed abundantly on those who wish to be enlightened; but always with a profound feeling of humility and gratitude, giving thanks to the source from whence flows all that is great and good, and everything that is true and eternal.

Spiritism is the completion of that law of love which you have trodden under foot so long.

Your hearts bring forth evil fruit, and you are consequently bad trees; but the Lord in His mercy digs up the tree which yields no fruit, or only bad fruit, to permit the free growth of the divine tree of Faith which Christ has planted with his

Digitized by Google

own hands; but men have not cultivated it, and the evil plants around it have choked it. Consequently, the Divine gardener is still obliged to work at his vine, to clear it of the parasites which smother it. This is the tree which refreshes the weary, and invites the wayworn traveller to repose. It will grow up and spread its blessed branches throughout the universe; and you will come from all parts, whatever may have been the outward religion in which you have been reincarnated; and all who have laboured at the work of regeneration by the apostleship of word and example, will say with joy, when you return to the Lord, "I have fulfilled my task well."

You who are Spiritists will also understand the hidden sense of the inspired words spoken of the Christ by the Forerunner: "His winnowing-fan is in his hand, and he shall thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor, and will gather the corn into his barn, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

The Lord, speaking through his messenger, made use of an expression which would strongly impress material men, and strike them with fear.

Be well assured that God has never abandoned man since his first appearance on your planet. His laws are as immutable and eternal as himself, and one of these is the law of progress, which is physical for the planet, and physical, moral, and intellectual for humanity, and for all creatures in all the kingdoms of nature, for every created thing is capable of being perfected.

Incarnation and reincarnation are also laws of God, and are the appointed instruments and means of reparation and progress. In all ages a guardian angel or protecting spirit has ever been allotted to man as his guide, who is chosen to protect him, and lead him in the way of progress.

In all ages, missionary spirits have descended among men to urge them onward in this path by revealing to them, or reminding them of the law of nature, which is the law of God; according to the circumstances, state of intelligence, and necessities of each period.

Digitized by Google

In all ages man has been invested with free will, and surrounded by unseen influences, some good, and others evil. He has received sufficient intelligence to distinguish between good and evil, in proportion to his moral and intellectual development, and when his free will has failed to lead him aright, he has been doomed to expiate his faults or crimes by appropriate moral sufferings after death, and has then been subjected to reincarnation, that he may repair his errors, and continue his course of progress upon your earth, which is one of the lower worlds of trials and expiations.

Reincarnation, combined with preliminary expiation in the errant state, is at once hell, purgatory, reparation, and progress. It is the holy ladder which all men must climb, and the steps are the phases of the different existences which must be passed through before arriving at the summit; for God has said through the mouth of his Christ, that none can attain to him, without being born, dying, and being re-born until the spirit has attained the limits of perfection.

Moses, and the prophets of the old law, had prepared the way for the coming era of human regeneration. Jesus is our Saviour, and our Master; he is the protecting and governing spirit of your planet (at the formation of which he presided), and of its humanity, and he will lead you to perfection. He descended among you to inaugurate this era, and to lay the foundations of your regeneration.

"His winnowing fan is in his hand;" for the work of regeneration began with the earliest days of Christianity.

He is still separating the darnel and the good seed; the chaff and the corn, as he has done in the past and will continue to do in the future.

The corn that he gathers into his barn represents the purified spirits who have finished their experiences in your world (such as it is at present, an inferior world of expiation), and who have become his devoted and intelligent missionaries, and labour at your moral and intellectual advancement either in the errant state, or incarnated on a mission.

The chaff that Jesus burns represents the guilty and

Digitized by Google

rebellious spirits who have failed in their trials, and whom he subjects first to expiation and then to reincarnation, under such conditions that their new experiences shall serve as a means of expiation, reparation, and progress, if they make a good use of them.

The fire in which the chaff is consumed, or, in other words, that in which the guilty and rebellious spirit expiates his offences in the errant state, is the guilty conscience. This awakens remorse and develops terrible or painful visions, according to the nature and degree of the offender's guilt. These, as we shall afterwards explain, are brought before the eyes of the spirit, who vainly attempts to fly from the view of his faults or crimes, and the moral sufferings which are always appropriate and proportioned to them.

This fire never is or will be extinguished. It is eternal, because God creates throughout all eternity; and thus there will always be spirits who commence their course from their original state of simplicity and ignorance to the limits of perfection, and fail. Having proved guilty and rebellious, they will be compelled to expiate and repair their offences; but the fire of the eternal Gehenna is extinguished in the case of every guilty spirit as soon as the chaff is burned; that is, as soon as he repents and humbles himself to ask for pardon under the influence of a sincere and profound repentance, and the ardent desire to repair his faults. He is then aided by good spirits to advance, and to prepare himself for fresh experiences. But remorse always pursues the guilty until he enters upon a new course, and as there will always be rebellious spirits, the fire of the eternal Gehenna cannot be extinguished, for it resembles an inheritance transmitted from one to another.

Jesus "will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor." The work of regeneration commenced with the first days of the era which Christ inaugurated, but it must now be completed; and Spiritism, the third and last exponent of the goodness of God to men, has come to complete it, and to shed light on all. Jesus has said that the wilfully blind will be thrown

Digitized by Google

into outer darkness, where, he adds, there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. But could Christ, a pure spirit and the type of love and charity, condemn guilty spirits to wailing and gnashing of teeth? Doubtless; but spirits are insensible to physical tortures. These words will serve to illustrate the hidden and allegorical character of all the teachings of Jesus. Weeping and gnashing of teeth typify the remorse arising from a guilty conscience.

Jesus "will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor." At the time decreed by God, when the regeneration shall be accomplished, when Spiritism shall have enlightened all men, and your earth is fitted to be the abode of good spirits only, those spirits who have previously been permitted to re-incarnate themselves on your earth and have remained guilty, will be cast into outer darkness. That is, they will be removed gradually, according to their degrees of guilt, to the lower worlds of trial and expiation, where they will have to expiate for long ages their persistence and obstinacy in evil, and their wilful blindness.

MATTHEW, CHAP. III.—VERSES 13–17. MARK, CHAP. I. VERSES 9–11. LUKE, CHAP. III.—VERSES, 21, 22.

Baptism of Jesus.

Matth. iii. (13) Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him; (14) And John checked him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and dost thou come to me? (15) And Jesus answered and said unto him, Permit it now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he permitted him. (16) And when Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water immediately, and, behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and coming upon him. (17) And lo, a voice from the heavens, saying, This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

Mark i. (9) And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. (10) And straightway going up out of the water, he saw the heavens cleft asunder, and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; (11) And there was a voice from the heavens: Thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.

Luke iii. (21) And while all the people were being baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and as he was praying, the heaven was opened,

Digitized by Google

(22) And the Holy Spirit descended upon him in a bodily shape like a dove, and there was a voice from heaven saying, Thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.

§ 54. Jesus was a pre-eminently pure spirit, and had no need to be baptized by John in the water, or to receive a baptism of penitence for the remission of any sin, for he had none to confess, and he confessed none. He had no occasion to wash an earthly body like yours, nor did his perfectly pure and immaculate spirit need the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire. On the contrary, it was his mission to administer these baptisms first to his apostles, who were chosen to preach his sublime morality among men by teaching and example; and then to confer this spiritual baptism on all who show themselves worthy of it, by practising and teaching his law of love like the apostles.

Why did Jesus come to receive the baptism of water from John in the Jordan, like every one else, and in sight of all?

To preach by example, from the commencement of his public mission, and to receive the confirmation of his origin, power and mission from God himself, in the sight of all, in accordance with the words which John had spoken before his arrival, in which he proclaimed him to be the Redeemer, Saviour and Perfecter of mankind.

Jesus descended among you to set you an example in all things, and his earthly mission left among men a model which they ought to copy, and they must of necessity walk in his steps before they can attain to perfection.

During his earthly mission men were to consider him a man like themselves, enduring all the trials of your humanity, and triumphing over them. He set the example of practising work, justice, charity and love, in which he gave instruction and laws; and he manifested light and truth, veiled by the letter and shrouded in parable, lest the eyes of the men of that age should be dazzled and blinded by their splendour.

After the completion of his earthly mission, men regarded him who had come to give them the type and model of

Digitized by Google

human perfection, as God himself. This was due to human interpretations, according to the state of intelligence and the needs of the age, and was preparatory to the future.

If you trace the course of the apparently human life of Jesus from his arrival on the banks of the Jordan to its termination on the cross, you will always and invariably see him teaching by example.

At the commencement of the public life of Jesus, he allowed himself to receive the baptism of water, which was intended to lead to penitence, from John, like all others who came to him. But before Jesus arrived on the banks of the Jordan, John had already spoken to the people, the Pharisees, the taxgatherers and soldiers, who had all come to him, thinking that he was the Christ, in the words recorded in Matthew, chap. vii. verses 11 and 12.

This will explain why John at first objected to baptize Jesus, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" And why he no longer refused when Jesus answered, "Permit it now, for thus it befits us to fulfil all righteousness;" meaning that we should always teach by example. John thus set the first example of submission and obedience to the Master.

John's previous words respecting Jesus were confirmed by the manifestation designed to enlighten men respecting his origin and mission, which took place after his baptism. This confirmation was in accordance with Hebrew traditions, and the state of intelligence of the period.

You are told that when Jesus had been baptized, he came out of the water immediately, and while he was praying, heaven opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in a bodily shape like a dove, and a voice was heard from heaven, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I amwell pleased."

The Lord thus manifested his power by sending an apparently material sign, visible to the human eye. The sign, like the accompanying voice, was only a spirit manifestation, intended to strike the attention of men, and to lead them to understand that the Spirit foretold by the

Digitized by Google

prophets had at last descended upon earth. You know that the spirit can assume all forms and appearances by means of its perisprit.

The ancients regarded the dove as the emblem of purity, and it was one of the animals which were sacrificed on the altar for the redemption of the children of Israel. The superior spirit who was entrusted with this manifestation chose the form which would attract most attention, both at the time of its occurrence, and after the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus. You will understand this if you reflect on his spiritual origin and his apparently human life and death.

The voice which came from heaven was not the voice of Almighty God. God never manifests himself or communicates directly with men, for however pure an incarnate spirit may be, its corporeal envelope forms an insuperable barrier between itself and the Divinity; but the Lord transmits his wishes through the pure spirits, who receive his direct inspirations, to the superior spirits, and to the good spirits according to the hierarchical scale; and these become his messengers.

It was a superior spirit who pronounced the words, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." All the people who had come to John on the banks of the Jordan, thought that God himself had spoken, just as the Hebrews believed that God had spoken to the prophets of the old Law. They thought that the Holy Spirit was the intelligence of God, who thus inspired men, and communicated with them directly; and therefore they supposed that it was God himself who took the form of a dove, and that it was also God who spoke at the same time from a different direction. But you now know that the figurative expression "Holy Spirit" denotes the spirits of the Lord, who are the ministers of his inspiration and the organs of his wishes; and you can understand that there were two distinct spirit manifestations.

These manifestations took place while Jesus was praying. The first lesson and the first example which he gave men was to show them that prayer, not of the lips but of the

Digitized by Google

heart, draws down the blessings of the Lord and the evidences of his love by causing his divine influence to descend upon them through the guardian spirits of humanity.

The water baptism which John administered, and which Jesus received in order to preach by example, thus showing that his baptism was only a figure, was both material and symbolical. It was material so far as the ablution of the body was concerned, and symbolical by the repentance and humility thus manifested; which each proclaimed by the public confession of his sins, which he made in a loud voice in the presence of all, when he acknowledged his faults and all the baseness which springs up in the human heart.

This water baptism was consequently a preparation for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire, which is sent from God, and which Christ vouchsafes to those who are worthy of it by sending them the aid and companionship of purified spirits.

It is good to remind men of this baptism of God, for it reminds them of the great events which have happened, and the obligations which are laid upon them.

The material part was a necessity of the time, and was intended to produce a profound Impression upon material men by a material event; but the symbolical part alone is important to you. The only true baptism is that which proceeds from the Lord. It is the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire which must purify souls, and not bodies.

The baptism of water has been made the symbol of Christianity Man has been too apt to forget the divine essence, and to think only of matter, and to attribute everything to the latter. His short-sighted spirit, enclosed within these narrow limits, has ended by almost entirely forgetting that, as he is sprung from a spiritual essence, he should pay attention to the spirit rather than the letter. Therefore purify yourselves, that you may receive new life.

The Churches have perverted water baptism from its object and intention by pouring water on the head of a newborn child, on pretence of delivering the child from "original sin;" that is, from a fault which was not committed by the

Digitized by Google

child, but by some one else; even while they pretend that the child's soul was created by God expressly for the body which it inhabits; and since nothing impure can proceed from the hands of God, this implies that the child must be personally pure and immaculate.

The Churches would not have perverted water baptism in this manner, if they had understood the words in which Christ proclaimed to Nicodemus that re-incarnation is a reality and not an allegory. It is a reality, and an immutable law which God has established from all eternity, as the means of purification and progress for the guilty spirit. It is the only means by which man can enter into the kingdom of God, or arrive at perfection, which alone permits him to approach the Fire of Omnipotence.

O Christians of all parties—Catholics, Protestants and Greeks! cease to think only of matter, and quit the letter which killeth for the spirit which giveth life. Retain the spirit of the baptism of water on the banks of the Jordan, and practise the symbolical part, which is repentance and humility. Prepare yourselves thus for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire, which purifies souls, and which Christ will give you if you show yourselves worthy of it by practising work, heartfelt humility, justice, love and charity. He will then send you purified spirits to inspire and sustain you, and to aid you to advance in the path of moral and intellectual progress.

MATTHEW, CHAP. I.—VERSES 1–17. LUKE, CHAP. III. VERSES 23–38.

Human Genealogy of Jesus.

Matth. i. (1) The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. (2) Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judah and his brethren; (3) And Judah begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom, and Esrom begat Aram; (4) And Aram begat Aminadab, and Aminadab begat Naasson, and Naasson begat Salmon; (5) And Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab, and Boaz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; (6) And Jesse begat David the King; and King David begat Solomon of the wife of Uriah; (7) And Solomon begat Rehoboam, and Rehoboam begat Abia, and Abia begat Asa; (8) And Asa begat Jehosaphat, and

Digitized by Google

Jehosaphat begat Jehoram, and Jehoram begat Ozias, and Ozias begat Jontham ; (9) And Jontham begat Ahaz, and Ahaz begat Hezekiah, (10) And Hezekiah begat Manasseh, and Manasseh begat Aman ; (11) And Aman begat Josiah, and Josiah begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time of their being carried away to Babylon. (12) And after their removal to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel, and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; (13) And Zorobabel begat Abiud ; and Abiud begat Eliakim, and Eliakim begat Azor ; (14) Azor begat Sadok, and Sadok begat Achim, and Achim begat Eliud; (15) And Eliud begat Eleazar, and Eleazar begat Matthan, and Matthan begat Jacob; (16) And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. (17) Therefore all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, and from David to the carrying away to Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the carrying away to Babylon to Christ are fourteen generations.

Luke iii. (23) And Jesus himself was about thirty years of age, being regarded as the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, (24) The son of Matthan, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Janna, the son of Joseph, (25) The son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Naum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggi, (26) The son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semei, the son of Joseph, the son of Judah, (27) The son of Joannas, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zorobabel, the son of Salathiel, the son of Meri, (28) The son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Kosam, the son of Elmodam, the son of Er, (29) The son of Joses, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, (30) The son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonan, the son of Eliakim, (31) The son of Melea, the son of Mainan, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, (32) The son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Naasson, (33) The son of Aminadab, the son of Aram, the son of Esrom, the son of Phares, the son of Judah, (34) The son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nachor, (35) The son of Saruch, the son of Rhagan, the son of Phalek, the son of Heber, the son of Sala, (36) The son of Canaan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, (37) The son of Methusaleh, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahaleel, the son of Canaan, (38) The son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, who was the son of God.

§ 35. You have already been instructed that Jesus is a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, whose origin is lost in the darkness of byegone eternities. He is the protector and ruler of your planet, and watched over its formation. Consequently he is both superior and anterior to the generations of men who have successively inhabited it. He appeared on your earth with a visible and tangible fluidic body, resembling a human body in appearance, but of a perispritic nature, incorporated by an adaptation of the laws of the superior worlds to the surrounding fluids which form your beings. You also know that this secret of the other

Digitized by Google

world was not intended to be revealed until the opening of the new era of Spiritism in your own days, when the progress which you have made has enabled you to receive this revelation.

Do not be surprised that Jesus of Nazareth was regarded by the Hebrews as of the same nature as his ancestors according to the flesh. If you examine into his spiritual genealogy, it will lead you back to God, the immediate and only Creator of everything which is pure and perfect.

The human genealogy attributed to Jesus is of no interest or importance in connection with the labours of his mission, or with its fulfilment in the regeneration of mankind.

If you consider the necessity of materializing all facts to render them intelligible to man, you will perceive the necessity of using expressions which could be understood and listened to conformably with circumstances which had been prearranged for many ages.

According to Hebrew traditions and the current interpretations of the writings of the prophets, it was expected that the Christ would be born at Bethlehem, among the descendants of David. The needful preparations for the great work of redemption began in very early times, though men were not aware of it; and these were carried on under conditions appropriate to the state of intelligence at different periods.

In order to accomplish this great work, Mary and Joseph, who were perfect spirits, were both incarnated on a mission to aid Jesus in his earthly mission. Joseph was less elevated than Mary, and they were both spirits who had not remained pure, but had been purified, and who were consequently inferior to Jesus. But their regained purity could not be sullied by impure surroundings, and they each selected a family which had been prepared for them beforehand, and which was likewise composed of superior spirits, though less elevated than themselves. But as you trace their ancestors back from generation to generation you meet with men animated with every brutish instinct.

You know that during the whole earthly mission of Jesus,

Digitized by Google

men regarded Mary as his mother and Joseph as his father; and by descent from Joseph, Jesus was the son of David.

Man cannot understand anything without fixing his attention on some starting-point from whence he can proceed in a direct line. The genealogies were written for Hebrews under the yoke of the Mosaic law, who were influenced by traditions handed down from age to age, the origin of which was lost in the obscurity of the past. It was therefore needful to direct their intelligence according to their accustomed manner of thought.

The root of the genealogy attributed to Jesus is "Adam," materially the first man created by the hand of God.

Intelligence has become developed and science has advanced in the course of ages. You now know that the creation of man from the dust of the ground, in a terrestrial paradise, in the midst of which stood the trees of life and of the knowledge of good and evil, is an allegory required to enable human intelligence to appropriate the lessons which it embodies. Even now, how few among you are able to comprehend eternal existence, without either beginning or end!

The genealogy of Jesus ascends to Adam by a figure, as the creation of the body of dust ascends to God.

The literal interpretation of Genesis could not have been contradicted, then, without offending the masses, alarming the feeble, and impeding the progress of the work of regeneration.

According to both Matthew and Luke, Jesus is the son of David through Joseph, his human father, who is himself shown to be a descendant of David.

The genealogy was recorded by both evangelists for the purpose of connecting the birth of Jesus with David, and they made researches accordingly; but much is lost in the obscurity of time, and many names were substituted for those which were unknown, and which they supposed ought to exist; but names are of little consequence, and genealogical relations were established by family relationships. The discrepancies between the two genealogies need not be

Digitized by Google

discussed. The root is the same, and the names sometimes belong to the same individuals, owing to confusion between the children of two brothers, and similar errors. Does it not sometimes happen that you yourselves bear additional names, or even change your names from human vanity, and will not those who look back upon your lives in future ages use sometimes one name and sometimes another, and yet they will denote the same individual? One writer followed one line of ancestors, and the other another; but the source was the same. The two genealogies both agree in Joseph's descent from David, which was the only essential point in the eyes of the Hebrews.

It is not surprising that the descent of Mary was not recorded likewise. Daughters were not included in the genealogies of the Israelites, even as they do not perpetuate a name among your noble families. It was only important to know that Mary belonged to the same tribe.

We have said that it is necessary to employ human means, which are always imperfect, to attain any desired spiritual end. The Apostle Paul thus alludes to the controversies on the human genealogy attributed to Jesus:—"Neither pay any attention to fables and endless genealogies, which are the cause of disputes rather than the government of God in faith. Now the end of the commandment is love from a pure heart, and good conscience, and heartfelt faith" (1 Tim. i. 4, 5.) Leave such disputes to the so-called wise men of your own time, who exert all their strength to move or overturn the small stumbling-blocks in their way. Remember that you must reserve your own strength to remove a mountain which stands in the way of the one straight path which it is yours to map out. Remember the words of the angel to Mary (Luke i. 32), those in the song of Zacharias (Luke i. 68–70), and what Jesus said to the Pharisees: "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" "David's," answered they. "Why, then," replied Jesus, "does he say in the Psalms, 'My Lord,' through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in the words, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand till I have made thy enemies thy

Digitized by Google

footstool.' If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matt. xxii. 41–43; Luke xx. 41–44.) Thus Jesus during his earthly ministry prepared men to understand that this human genealogy is inapplicable to him, that they might afterwards be more ready to accept the revelation of his extra-human origin and nature.

§ 56. What is the actual truth respecting the creation of the spirit and body of man? And what is the spiritual genealogy of Jesus?

You have asked two distinct questions, one referring to man, and the other to Jesus. It must be answered from a general point of view in relation to the origin of the soul, its phases, its progress, and its destinies, from the moment of its origin till the period when it attains to perfection.

Everything in Creation, literally everything, has a common origin, and rises from the infinitely little to the infinitely great; even unto God, who is at once the origin and goal of all things.

Never forget that everything proceeds from God, and returns to him: God, the uncreated Creator, the Father of each and all—God, the great Creator of all that exists; the immovable pillar which supports the myriads of worlds which are scattered through space like atoms in the air.

The universal fluid surrounding and proceeding from God is the instrument and means of action of the Supreme Intelligence. His omnipotence and will regulates its properties, combinations, modifications and transformations in infinity and eternity. Thus he effects all the spiritual, material and fluidic creations resulting in life and universal harmony; and thus he creates all worlds, and everything which lives and moves and has its being in all the kingdoms of nature.

The Apostle Paul felt the creative power of the Lord when he said—"For in Him we live and more and are" (Acts xvii. 28); "For of him and through him and in him are all things" (Romans xi. 36).

The spirit is a spiritual essence, and is the principle of intelligence from the moment of its formation. It springs from the universal Whole; that is, from the fluids diffused

Digitized by Google

through space, which are the source of everything which exists, either in a spiritual, fluidic, or material condition.

The spirit at its origin as a spiritual essence is an intelligent principle formed of the quintessence of these fluids. It is so ethereal that no language could convey any idea of it, especially to your limited intelligence. The will of the Lord God Almighty, the one sole essence of life in infinity and eternity, animates these fluids to give them being by means of a subtle combination, the essence of which is only found in the divine radiance. Thus he converts them into spiritual essences, which are the primitive principles destined for the formation of the germinating spirit.

Life thus exists everywhere throughout nature in these eternal germs, which God animates by his will alone, according to the necessities of the universal harmony of all worlds, kingdoms and creatures, whether in the material or in the fluidic state.

When the material worlds are formed, they are composed of all the constituent principles of the different kingdoms of nature which the ages will evolve in the spiritual, material, and fluidic order.

The intelligent principle is developed at the same time as matter, and progresses with it, passing from inertia to life. God watches over the commencement of all things, and his paternal eye follows the phases of each step in advance, and he attracts to himself everything which has attained to perfection.

These multitudinous latent principles remain inert till the Sovereign Master assigns them to the appropriate end which they were intended to fulfil (according to the immutable and eternal laws of nature which he has established) under the influence of such surroundings as are fitted to unfold them.

They then passively undergo the transformations requisite for their development through ages which might appear eternal, under the direction and guidance of spirits entrusted with their care, and pass successively through the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, and through the inter-

Digitized by Google

mediate forms and species which connect each of these kingdoms together.

By following this continual progression they arrive at length at the period which is preparatory to formed spirit; that is, the intermediate state between animal incarnation and the conscious spiritual state. After passing through this preparatory period they attain to the condition of a creature in possession of free will, with concentrated and independent intelligence, and responsible for its actions. They thus become fitted for intelligence, knowledge and greatness.

When the spiritual essence originates as a principle of intelligence, or a spirit in course of formation, it passes first into the mineral kingdom, and animates the mineral, if we may be allowed thus to express ourselves, by using the only expressions appropriate to your limited intelligence which human language permits us.

We say it *animates* the mineral, for everything has a real existence in nature, since everything dies; and everything which dies has possessed the principle of life, and was thus animated by *relative* intelligence.

You may wonder using the word intelligence in speaking of an inert object. Certainly it possesses neither thought nor action, and the spiritual essence is unconscious of its being. In this stage it *exists*—nothing more.

The spiritual essence is then in the condition of a simple essence of life, and is wholly unconscious of its existence. It builds up the rock and the mineral by attracting and combining the appropriate fluids through the action of magnetic attraction directed by the controlling spirits.

The action of these spirits is more direct and constant in proportion to the unconsciousness of the evolving spirit.

In order to avoid repetition, we wish you to observe specially that nothing exists in any of the kingdoms of Nature, whether mineral, vegetable, animal, or human, without the supervision of the spirits of the Lord. All have a task to fulfil and something to watch over; but spirits

Digitized by Google

are not appointed to regulate the formation of individual minerals, plants, or beings. Their action is general, being exerted through immutable natural laws, which it is not yet allowable or possible for you to understand; and their operation is exerted over the mass.

The mineral dies when it is removed from the surroundings in which the Author of Nature has placed it. When the stone is taken from the quarry, or the mineral is dug from the mine, they lose their natural life, like a plant uprooted from the soil.

The spiritual essence which existed in the pores of the mineral is withdrawn from it by magnetic action directed by the guardian spirits, and is transferred to another point; while the body of the mineral, from which the spirit has departed, is applied to the use for which man designs it.

It need not surprise you that the mineral should frequently preserve its coherence for ages after the spiritual essence which was necessary for its formation has departed. Every substance has its relative properties, according to laws which you cannot yet understand.

Does not the human body preserve the cohesion of all its material parts under certain circumstances, although the spirit has left it?

Do you not notice cases of material duration among plants? And do not some plants preserve the appearance of life, both the freshness of colour and the firmness of the stem, for a long time after they have been separated from the earth in which they grew, and consequently from the latent principle of intelligence which existed in them? Everything in nature is linked together with a view to the advantage and usefulness of the spirit which has arrived at the conscious stage of being.

Dead bodies, whether stone, plant, animal, or man, aid in the universal harmony by fulfilling the functions which are assigned to them.

The spiritual essence which animates the mineral is not an individual. It forms a whole, which is personified and divided when the mass is divided, and it thus attains to in-

Digitized by Google

dividuality. This happens also in the case of the principles animating the polype and certain plants; while in the mineral kingdom, the spiritual essence undergoes the successive materializations which are needful to prepare it to pass through the connecting links which participate in the nature of the mineral and of the plant. We say *materializations*, for we cannot say *incarnations* at the commencement of a being.

After having thus passed through these intermediate forms, which are connected together by continual progression, and after the double magnetic action which produces life and death in the phases of existence through which it has already passed, it is prepared to undergo the experience of sensation which awaits it in the plant. The spiritual essence, or spirit in the state of formation, then passes into the vegetable kingdom.

This is a step in advance, but there is still no consciousness of existence. Material existence is then both shorter and more rapid; but there is neither consciousness nor suffering—only sensation.

Thus, when a living branch is cut from a tree there is a kind of echo of the wound which has been made. There is no suffering, only a sort of vibration from one point to another; just as when a plant is violently uprooted before it has arrived at maturity. A magnetic vibration is perceived, which prepares the spiritual essence to develop its being.

After the death of the plant the spiritual essence is transferred to another point; and after undergoing successive and necessary and always progressive materializations, it passes on to the intermediate forms which participate in the vegetable and the animal. In these last stages of existence, when the developing spirit begins to feel an exterior action, though without knowledge of its causes or effects, the sensation of pain commences.

Thus, the spirit which is being developed under the care and supervision of attendant spirits, effects its development relatively to the matter which envelopes it, by con-

Digitized by Google

tinuous progression, until it attains to the consciousness of its existence.

When it is prepared for active, exterior and relative life, the developing spirit passes into the animal kingdom.

It becomes an intelligent principle, and possesses the kind of intelligence which you call instinct. It possesses will and faculties, limited to its necessities and the preservation of its material life, to its allotted functions and to the object which it is intended to fulfil in nature, according to the measure in which it is to contribute to the universal life and harmony.

The spirit is still in course of formation, for it is still without free will, or independent rational knowledge of its faculties and actions. It then passes on in the animal kingdom, by a continuous progressive advance, in proportion to the progress already made, and to that which is still necessary. It passes through all the successive phases of existence which are required to develop it, and to conduct it to the limit of the intermediate forms which participate both in the animal and in man. These intermediate stages gradually bring it nearer and nearer to the human kingdom by insensible gradations; for although spirit animates matter, matter likewise aids in the development of spirit.

After having undergone all the transfigurations of matter, and passed through all the stages of development requisite to acquire a certain degree of intelligence, the spirit arrives at a point preparatory to the conscious spiritual state. This is the moment which your wise men, who know so little of the mysteries of Nature, are unable to determine; the point where instinct ceases and reason begins.

You were told that the spirit was created simple and ignorant, in allusion to the phase of existence preparatory to humanity. It is still somewhat too soon to reveal the origin of the spirit, but you may nevertheless publish what we tell you; for when your work shall be openly given to the world, incarnate spirits will be better prepared to accept what they would formerly have taken, and would even

Digitized by Google

now* take, for a monstrous assertion or a ridiculous absurdity.

When the spirits have arrived at the point which is preparatory to humanity, they are trained for a conscious, independent and free spiritual life in worlds suited for the purpose. At this moment the spirit passes into the state of innocence and ignorance. The will of the Sovereign Master gives it the knowlege of its faculties, and consequently of its actions; and this knowledge leads to free will, independent and reasonable intelligence, and moral responsibility.

When the spirit has reached this stage, it is ready to be humanized if it should fail. It is then in a state of complete innocence, having put off the instincts which were needed by the requirements of animality alone, with its last animal coverings.

The statue has finally received shape. The formed spirit then clothes itself with the fluids needful for it, under the supervision of guiding spirits, and thus composes what you call the perisprit. This fluidic body then becomes the means and instrument of its constant and sustained progress from the starting-point of innocence and ignorance, until it has attained to moral perfection, when it is no longer liable to any fall. But if, on the other hand, the perisprit becomes the cause of its fall, it also becomes the means of its progress, by raising it through successive incarnations and re-incarnations, which are expiatory at first, and ultimately glorious, until it has attained to moral perfection.

We have already told you (§ 31) that magnetism is the universal agent. It is the great law which governs all things; and the magnetic fluids form the connecting links between all worlds, and unite all spirits, whether incarnate or not. It is the universal bond which God has given us to surround

* April, 1863 (Ed.) This book was published in France in 1866. The rapid development of theories of Evolution since the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species" in 1859, and their present almost universal acceptance, notwithstanding the ridicule which such theories met with during the first sixty years of the present century, form an admirable commentary on this passage (Transl.)

Digitized by Google

us like a single being, and to help us to ascend to him by our united efforts.

When the spirit rises from the intermediate state which precedes the life of self-consciousness, and enters into possession of free will, it accretes the fluidic covering which you call the perisprit, which forms its constitution, if we may thus employ an expression which you can understand. But there is this difference: whereas the human constitution appears to you to be independent of the spirit which inhabits the body, the fluidic constitution is the result of the tendencies of the spirit.

Fluids mutually attract each other, and the influence of similar sympathetic fluids forms the link between spirits who are animated by the same tastes and feelings, and draws them together, even if they are not of the same order. Spirits thus attract others who are similar to themselves, and sympathize with their tastes and sentiments, whether good or bad.

When spirits have acquired the prerogative of free will, and are at liberty to choose for themselves, they are subject to spirits who are appointed to develop their faculties. It is then that their free will leads them to choose one path rather than another. They are more or less obedient to those who are entrusted with their guidance and development, and it is then that they are led to choose a course which may be good or evil. They may fail, or may faithfully and gradually pursue the course which is pointed out to them.

Many fail, but some resist the temptations of pride and envy; and the fall of all spirits is due to pride springing from presumption and envy.

A proud man is envious because he cannot bear any one to be superior to him; he is selfish because he looks at everything as it affects himself; and he is presumptuous on account of his misplaced confidence in his own strength and intelligence.

Do you not see little children manifesting signs of pride, presumption, selfishness and envy, which are the causes of the first fall? These are spirits who have already passed through ages of successive expiations and reincarnations, and are

Digitized by Google

not yet purified. They try to do everything which they see you attempt, and pretend that they can do it as well as you, being misled by their misplaced confidence in themselves; and they often rebel against the wisdom of their father, who forbids them to attempt actions beyond their strength, and which might result in serious consequences.

The spirits who fail are intractable, and rebel against the authority and advice of those who are entrusted with their guidance and development. Their evil tendencies and desires attract evil spirits, who sympathize with them; but you should clearly understand that the fall is due to the act of the spirit itself, and not to its being led astray. Spirits are free to choose one course of action rather than another, and therefore act according to their own free will, and the sympathy they experience for inferior spirits, and which leads them astray, proceeds from their own disposition; and it is only after their own fall that they enter into similar conditions with the others.

On the other hand, those who are obedient to their guides faithfully and gradually follow the path which is pointed out for their progress. They then attract good spirits, who sympathize with their good tendencies.

Whether the spirit remains pure until it has arrived at perfection, or whether it fails, and subsequently arrives at perfection also, the fluids of the perisprit vary continually under the attractive influence of the surrounding fluids, according to the progress and tendencies of the spirit whom they clothe, and who assimilates those fluids which are most in sympathy with his intelligence and spiritual necessities. The fluids of the perisprit are dense and opaque in proportion to the inferiority of the spirit, and the nature of the perisprit is more or less pure and fluidic in proportion to his elevation. To the spirit the perisprit is matter. In the case of a fallen spirit, as of one who has remained pure, the perisprit is necessarily modified according to the phases of his existence and experiences.

It is only when the spirit has attained to perfection that he is able to modify his perisprit at will, according to the

Digitized by Google

needs of the moment, and to assimilate it to the regions through which he passes, and the missions with which he is entrusted by the Lord, although the purified essence of the perisprit remains unchanged.

Some of the spirits who fall misuse their free will in the course of their development; others do so almost at the outset, and are obstinately proud, presumptuous, envious, disobedient and rebellious to their guides; in short, they revolt against them.

When these presumptuous and rebellious spirits have fallen as low as the most material conditions of humanity, they are humanized or incarnated on the primitive worlds, to be subdued, and to progress under the restraints of the flesh. These are worlds where man has not yet appeared, but which have been prepared for his advent. Such spirits are incarnated in human substances rather than in bodies. The elements of these substances are diffused through space, and are afterwards gathered together in the planet where the incarnation is to take place, and are combined by the action of the spirits who are prepared for them. Here they are obliged to develop themselves and to progress in the course of successive ages and generations.

The spirit clothed with its perisprit, acting under the supervision of the controlling spirits, attracts the elements which are needed to form its material envelope, as the loadstone attracts iron. This still results from magnetic attraction, in accordance with natural law.

After its fall, and before its incarnation, the spirit constructs its perisprit according to its natural tendencies. The fluids which it has assimilated retain their influence; but these fluids change their nature during incarnation, but always correspond with the progress or the faults of the spirit. Every incarnation which results in moral improvement also leads to an improvement in the fluids which compose the perisprit. We may compare this to a peasant maiden throwing aside her coarse garments to assume the light and elegant costume of a bride.

The matter with which the human spirit is burdened, aids

Digitized by Google

in its development, as in the case of the spiritual essence in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms.

Some spirits only fall after they have been obedient for ages to those who are entrusted with their guidance and development, and after they have faithfully and gradually followed the path which had been pointed out for their progress until they have attained to a greater or less degree of moral and intellectual development. They are then incorporated on more or less inferior or elevated planets, according to their degree of culpability, to undergo a more or less material or fluidic incarnation under conditions appropriate and proportioned to their fault, and to the necessities of progress corresponding to the elevation of the spirit.

God continually creates worlds in infinite space and eternity appropriate to the incarnations of spirits who have fallen, as he creates the spiritual essences, or spirits themselves. The primitive material and fluidic worlds are more or less inferior or superior to one another, until you arrive at the purest fluidic planets, which you may call celestial or divine worlds, where none but pure spirits may dwell.

Those spirits who are obedient to their guides faithfully pursue the course marked out for them, and continue their progress in fluidic spheres, which become gradually more and more elevated, where everything is in harmony with the spirits who inhabit them. If they remain obedient to their guides, they pass from eternity to eternity, after having undergone every phase of existence and experience requisite to lead them to perfection. When they have reached it, the influence of matter upon them has become reduced to nothing; we say *matter*, for the fluids of the perisprit, and those which it assimilates, are matter to the spirit.

They were pure in the state of innocence and instruction, and always remain pure in the path of progress; but in order to attain to perfection they must traverse all worlds under the tutelage of the spirits commissioned to guide and develop them, in proportion to and in accordance with the conditions of their elevation; but always in the spiritual state, for they study from the great book of the universe in space. They

Digitized by Google

thus visit all the spheres—the primitive, inferior and superior worlds of all degrees, which are the innumerable dwelling-places of spirits who have fallen, and are undergoing successive incarnations and reincarnations, at first material, and then less and less material, or fluidic, and more and more fluidic, until the influence of matter upon them has become obliterated, and they also become pure spirits.

The spirits who have fallen are also obliged, before arriving at perfection, and in proportion to and in accordance with the conditions of their elevation, to traverse all the worlds inhabited by spirits who have remained pure, as well as by incarnated spirits, at every stage of the spiritual scale. Their human studies suffice for the worlds which they themselves have inhabited as incarnate spirits. They study others in the errant state, between each incarnation, when they traverse all the layers of air and the worlds suspended in space, learning on the one hand and teaching on the other, but always rising towards higher regions.

Jesus is one of those spirits who were pure in the state of innocence and ignorance, or of infancy and instruction. He was always obedient to the spirits who were entrusted with his guidance and development, and faithfully and gradually followed the course pointed out to him for his progress. He has thus remained pure, and having never fallen, has arrived at sidereal perfection, and become a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity.

Although Jesus is the greatest spiritual essence next to God, he is not the only one. He is one of those spirits who may be called, in human language, the guard of honour of the King of Heaven. God has appointed him to be the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet. He watched over its formation and rules over it from the height of celestial splendours. He is a spirit of primitive purity, perfect and immaculate, unfallen, and (because in direct communion with God) infallible. He is your Master and ours, and directs the holy phalanx of the innumerable spirits who labour at the progress of your planet and its humanity; and he will ultimately lead you to perfection.

Digitized by Google

You now understand what we implied by saying that the creation of the first man, and the genealogy of Jesus, leading back to Adam, were figurative, and that if you traced back the spiritual genealogy of Jesus, it would lead you up to God. Everything has a common origin, and proceeds from the infinitely small to the infinitely great, up to God, the point of departure and of reunion. Everything proceeds from and returns to God.

Behold how everything is linked together in the vast system of the universe which the Lord has unrolled before your eyes! Behold the intermediate forms in all kingdoms of Nature, linking every species together, some participating in the mineral and the vegetable, the stone and the plant; others in the plant and the animal, and others, again, in the animal and man. These are precious links which bind together and connect everything. By means of these the developing spirit passes successively through all the kingdoms and intermediate species, and thus rises from the original spiritual essence by a successive and continuous development to the stage of formed spirit, possessed of conscious, free and responsible life, having risen from the creature to man. These precious links bind everything together, that man may more easily comprehend the unity of this vast creation—so vast that human intelligence is unable to grasp it, and often refuses to acknowledge its mysteries because its mole's eyes are incapable of discovering them.

We do not speak of those proud men who may feel degraded by such a revelation. Does man, the lord of the creation, really spring from such a source, and is this his origin? The first hints of this, which have already provoked much mockery and criticism, were mingled with truth and error, that the good seed might have time to sprout; for there is always time to burn the chaff. Let not idle objectors alarm those whom the Master has commissioned us to enlighten, by saying that this would lead a man to despise the spirit which might animate the body of his son or his father.

It requires a very long period—so long that you could not

Digitized by Google

calculate it, before the spiritual essence which has attained to the comparative state of intelligence of an animal, can acquire the necessary development in the animal kingdom to pass to the intermediate state, and through the intermediate species, which partake of the nature of the animal and of man. After having passed through these, it again remains for a long lapse of time, which you are equally unable to estimate, in the stage preparatory to humanity, from whence the spirit arises, fully developed, by the will of the Lord, and by means of a complete transformation. Then only it receives the gift of independent, free and responsible intelligence.

Everything in the vast unity of Creation and of all the kingdoms of Nature is linked together by natural, immutable and eternal laws. There is a reciprocal and centralizing action, affecting preservation, reproduction and destruction alike; for everything conduces to the development and progress of all creatures. Everything which exists, and lives and dies, in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, and all the beings which live and die in the animal and human kingdoms, from the microscopic animalcule up to man, have each and all some work, use and function, leading to the development of each species, and conducing to universal life and harmony. The swarms of microscopic animalculæ which are invisible to the naked eye, and which can only be rendered visible by the most powerful microscope, are diffused throughout air, water, liquids and solids. They aid in the development and maintenance of animal and human existence; for example, those which live among the grass contribute to the sustenance of the sheep and goats which crop it. No such thought troubles these creatures, any more than the sheep thinks of being slaughtered for your support. But the knife which puts an end to the life of the animal, releases the relative intelligence, or developing spirit, and allows it to be employed under more favourable conditions. It is by this spirit passing through all the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, and through the intermediate forms and species which connect them, in

Digitized by Google

the course of eternities of ages, that it is developed by continual progression; until at length thought and moral existence commence.

But you would fall into a grievous error if you were to suppose that you must destroy what exists around you to assist in its development. Everything must live for its own and the general good. Therefore destroy no more than what is absolutely necessary for your existence, and let the wisdom of the Lord alone provide for the rest. When man comprehends the links which bind everything in creation together, his heart will be softened, and he will understand the necessity of using everything without abusing it. Everything in this vast unity of creation exists, is born, lives, moves, dies, and is re-born, according to the universal spiritual action which is guided by the will of God, under the action of the immutable laws of Nature which he has established from all eternity.

Be well assured that there is nothing *spontaneous* in Nature, for the origin of everything is prepared beforehand. Man can only comprehend phenomena which appeal to his senses; and it seems to him that everything which appears suddenly, without his foreseeing the cause, is a new and spontaneous creation; but the germs existed previously. Man perceives only matter; but the intelligence fitted to inhabit it is placed there as soon as the matter is fitted to contain it; and life appears at once to the eyes of man, under forms appropriate to the medium and the surrounding influences, under the secret direction and supervision of watchful spirits, and according to general laws of nature which man cannot yet understand or explain.

O men! whom we love so much, we desire your welfare, and we would destroy the "demon" which possesses you—Pride, which is your deadliest enemy. Let not pride lead you to reject this revelation of your humble origin without examination. Say not that it degrades you, but rather that it exalts you, by aiding you better to comprehend the grandeur of your Creator. We also, like yourselves, and all but He who was from all eternity, and will exist to all eternity, have

Digitized by Google

originally commenced our existence as a spiritual essence or principle of intelligence, and our developing spirits have passed through all these metamorphoses and transfigurations of matter before arriving at the state of formed spirit, gifted with the knowledge of its desires, faculties and actions, and thus rendered an independent, free and responsible creature by the possession of free will. We do not teach you metempsychosis, but simply reveal the natural law of equality before God of all that exists, and of everything which your senses can perceive.

God is a Father who is uniformly tender to his children, and has no favourites; all are his creatures, and none will be disinherited. Oh, that you could understand the height and depth of this endless chain which binds all Nature into one whole! Would that this might awaken the love of man by showing him the infinite love of his God! Let not sceptics and sophists find fault, and let not would-be philosophers without philosophy deny, but let them examine our words with unprejudiced minds. If you are filled with love and reverence for your Creator, and love and charity towards all your fellow-men, and towards all the creatures of the Lord, fortify your hearts with the love of knowledge and the desire for progress, and seek to understand with heartfelt humility and disinterestedness, and you will understand. Seek for light, and you shall receive light. God sends good spirits to the aid of those who labour patiently, and they will aid you to perceive and know; for there is nothing hidden which shall not be revealed, and nothing unknown which shall not be known. The studies of one man will be useful to aid another to advance in knowledge and love. Moreover, you will be helping yourselves, for reincarnation opens the way to man to resume his incomplete and unfinished labours. And when the light has shone upon you, then you will raise yourselves towards your Creator in a transport of holy rapture, exclaiming "Praise to God!"

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN,

With the concurrence of the Apostles.

Digitized by Google

§ 57. How is the spirit which has arrived at the preparatory period to humanity led to the state of formed spirit, or of intelligent, free and responsible individuality? And how do pride and envy cause its fall, after it has once been gifted with free-will, the knowledge of its faculties, and freedom of action?

When the spirit has passed through animal matter, and has attained to a certain degree of development, it needs to remain in an intermediate state before commencing its spiritual life. It cannot enter upon an active, conscious and independent existence until it has freed itself entirely from its forced contact with the flesh. It must forget and cleanse itself from its relations to matter; and it is at this period that the transformation from instinct to conscious intelligence is effected.

When the spirit is sufficiently developed in the animal state, it is restored, in a manner, to the universal whole, but under special conditions. It is led to worlds in course of formation; preparatory regions, where it must find the medium in which the constituent principles of the perisprit are formed. It is then like a feeble ray of light in the midst of dense masses of vapour which encompass it on all sides. The spirit loses consciousness of its existence, for the influence of matter upon it must be destroyed during this state of stagnation. It falls into a condition which we may call lethargy, to make it intelligible to you; and during this period the perisprit which is intended to receive the spiritual principle, is developed around this spark of true life. Its form is undefined at first, but it gradually attains to perfection, like the germ in its mother's womb, and passes through all the various stages of development; and the spirit awakes from its stupor when its envelope is prepared for it, and utters its first cry of admiration at the glorious universe around. In this stage the perisprit of the spirit is completely fluidic even to our eyes, and the flame within it, the spiritual essence of life, is so pale that it is difficult for our senses, acute as they are, to distinguish it.

This is the state of spiritual infancy. After this the great

Digitized by Google

spirits who watch over the education of spirits in the stage of simplicity, ignorance and innocence, lead them towards the fluidic sphere where they must dwell during their moral and intellectual development until they have acquired the full use of their powers, and are thus enabled to choose their own course. The spirit passes through the phases of infancy, and its protecting guardians teach it the meaning of the free will which God has entrusted to it. They explain the use which it can make of it, and warn it against the dangers which it may encounter. The first lesson which they teach it is the love and gratitude which it owes to the Great Being. It is then gradually led on to study the fluids which surround it, and the spheres which it is able to perceive. Its experienced guides lead it towards the regions where worlds are in course of formation, that it may study their mysteries, and at length it descends towards the inferior regions to learn to direct the organic principles of all that exists in the various kingdoms of nature. From these it passes on to higher spheres, where it learns to direct the atmospheric and telluric phenomena which you perceive without comprehending them ; and it thus passes from study to study, and from progress to progress, until it attains to that infinite knowledge which enables it to approach its Sovereign Master.

But spirits are at liberty to make either a good or bad use of their free will when it has attained its full development. They may follow their own course either at the starting-point, or at a more or less advanced stage of their experience, and are then given over to their own devices, like yourselves ; that is, they refuse to submit to the friendly influence of their guides who surround them, like the affectionate relatives of a youth who would save him from the dangers of life, and they must then suffer a terrible apprenticeship of free will.

Everything is so beautiful in the superior regions, and such magnificent objects are revealed to the gaze of the spirit, that it is dazzled and blinded. Then its instincts

Digitized by Google

awake, and pride or envy nearly always attends the noble ambition of learning and succeeding.

At this stage the spirit feels the paternal influence of the God whose existence is revealed to it, but cannot see him. Nothing but what is perfect can approach perfection; and although the spirit is free and independent, it is still ignorant, and has not yet made trial of its own powers. Spirits in the state of infancy are entrusted to masters who labour at the mental and moral development of their pupils both by precept and example. If the pupils laboriously follow the path of spiritual progress, and work ardently at their development, in obedience to their guides, they grow in wisdom, purity and knowledge; and thus, without having fallen, arrive at a point where the central light is veiled from them no longer. Or else they trust in their own powers, neglect the advice which is given them, and are overwhelmed at the sight of the splendour surrounding the great spirits, and yield to pride or envy. Pride overcomes them because they already wield great power over the inferior regions, which they are learning to govern. Under the direction of the spirits entrusted with their education, and the special protector of the planet, they learn to direct the revolutions of the seasons and the fertility of the soil, and guide the incarnate spirits by their secret influence; but if they believe that the authority which they possess is due to their own merits, they disregard the advice of their guides, and fall. Envy misleads them, because they do not always understand the powerful action of God; they refuse to admit that there is a spiritual hierarchy, and they charge their Creator with injustice. You must always remember that God alone *creates.*

These poor blind ones in the midst of light sometimes even fall into atheism, incredible as it may appear. In this case especially, atheism is the offspring of pride; for as they cannot see Him who has originated all things, they deny his existence, and regard themselves as both the base and summit of the edifice. It is then that their chastisement is

Digitized by Google

most severe, for they are doomed to primitive human incarnation; and it is absolutely necessary for their own good that these guilty ones should suffer heavily from the Hand whose existence they have denied. Pride, envy, or atheism thus cause their fall, and they are cast into the dark places of human incarnation, according to their degree of culpability, under circumstances corresponding to their need of expiation and progress.

Do not misunderstand what we have told you of the action of these spirits who are progressing without having yet failed, and who assemble in the inferior regions to guide the incarnate spirits by influencing them as friendly guardians. The guardian angels of spirits incarnated on the inferior worlds are spirits of your own order, but, as you may suppose, purer than those whom they protect; and these likewise have their guides and protectors, to whom they pay good heed, for everything is connected together from the base to the summit in a hierarchy of love and union.

§ 58. You say that those spirits who are about to be humanized, and have fallen sufficiently low, are cast down to the primitive worlds, where man has not yet appeared, but which are already prepared for his advent, and that they are there incarnated in human substances, rather than bodies. In what conditions do these human substances exist?

They are rudimentary bodies. Man arrives on earth in a rudimentary condition, like everything which is formed on the primitive worlds. The male and female are neither strong nor developed nor intelligent, and can scarcely drag about their gross and shapeless bodies. They live, like animals, on whatever they find suitable for them on the ground. The trees and soil bring forth abundance for the food of every species, and the carnivorous animals do not attack them, for the providence of God watches over the preservation of all. They have no instincts but hunger and the necessity of reproduction; but succeeding generations gradually become more developed; their form improves, and they are placed in a dwelling which answers to their increasing requirements. But we need not now detail the history of Creation to you.

Digitized by Google

The spirit comes to inhabit bodies formed of substances contained in the materials of which the planet is composed; but these elements are so arranged that the spirit can use and appropriate them. We might better compare them to fleshy fungi; and you may form an idea of the human creation by studying the shapeless larvæ which live on various plants. Their body forms a nearly inert mass, composed of materials which are still soft and imperfectly combined, and they crawl or rather glide along, for even their limbs are almost rudimentary.

O men! this is your origin and starting-point, when pride, envy, or even atheism in the midst of light, followed by disobedience and revolt, have led you to fall into conditions which degrade you to primitive human incarnation! Do not turn away your eyes with horror, but rather bless the Lord who permits you to look up to him, and to behold the image of perfection in the radiant spirits who shine around him.

But these primitive human incarnations, or their causes, are not to be regarded as arising from the fierce vengeance of an insulted Deity. God does not avenge himself; why should he? But his wise providence places the proud spirit who believes himself to be the moving power of the universe in a position where he can experience his own weakness. He is like a parent who has permitted his presumptuous child to try to lift the weight that he sees his father carry, and then allows him to exert his strength little by little, to teach him the use of it.

Horrible as these incarnations may appear, they are nevertheless of immense benefit to the fallen spirit, who is thus forced to pass through the phases and under the yoke of the very matter of which he supposed himself to be the master. Thus he learns fully to realize his own weakness, and acquires the strength, skill and experience in which he was deficient, through exercise and conflict. But the punishment of the spirit is the means of his regeneration, for he would remain vicious were he not subjected to this terrible experience; and if he still retained his power, he

Digitized by Google

would exert it contrary to the universal harmony, which is impossible. It is therefore only paternal providence which condemns the spirit to suffer these incarnations solely with a view to the advancement which he may deserve ; and they may be indefinitely shortened and lightened by his zeal, repentance, and docility.

The providence of the Lord watches over the preservation of all beings. The species which are incapable of defending themselves are not attacked in a positive manner. They have enemies, it is true, but their enemies are as weak as themselves, and are not species which could destroy them utterly, without their having any means of defence or flight. Every species seeks the nourishment which is suitable for it, and avoids that for which it feels no appetite.

Man has no enemies to fear in the state of primitive and rudimentary incarnation, any more than the fungus, which is only devoured by insects when it has reached the limit of its material existence. No carnivorous or herbivorous animal, nor any kind of bird or fish, will feed upon him. The carnivorous animals do not begin to attack man until he is no longer defenceless, or without means of escape ; and as regards herbivorous animals, they would not attack the hunter unless they themselves attracted his pursuit.

Matter follows a regular course of development, but spirits need not traverse all its phases, if they rise above them. There will always be classes of spirits corresponding to the different degrees of incarnation.

The transition from the state of primitive incarnation to the human form is effected by the development of the unique type in the germ. The type is one, but is modified by its surroundings ; and hence you may deduce conclusions regarding the formation of the spirit in the various kingdoms of nature. Just as the origin of the human type arises from plastic and fecundated slime, so is it likewise with the principle of the first plants and animals. Microscopic plants are developed, which grow and spread on, or under the soil. They produce seeds which are carried to different places,

Digitized by Google

and are modified by the various influences of the surrounding soil, water, heat, and fluids. Then the animal types are born, which pass through similar transformations, and follow a similar course of development, brought about by similar causes.

You should understand why and how man is enabled to acquire the direction and supremacy over the planet, although when he is first incarnated, the animal races have attained a degree of material development superior to that of the humanized spirit. The progress of man has not been hastened, but retarded. As a physical retrogression has taken place, his intelligence must be roused afresh, whereas in animals it requires to be developed. You must clearly understand that when a new planet is created, its inherent principle of intelligence, or latent spiritual principle, requires to be elaborated, developed, individualized, and regulated. The latent principle must pass through an innumerable series of transformations before attaining this end; but the incarnate spirit, on the contrary, is cast back into matter to undergo its constraint, and to accustom it to conquer matter, and to control itself; and when the intelligent spirit has already passed through a certain series of stages, it can, if it desires, rapidly reascend to the regions from which it has been banished, and to the lofty spheres to which it ought to attain. In such a case there is no longer the slow and almost insensible progress of creating, as it were, a new spiritual being, but the acquisition of an intelligent lesson, the first principles of which are already learned, and which it is only necessary to apply.

We may compare the spirit which has already been trained in the various inferior kingdoms (mineral, vegetable, and animal) to a child who is developed, born, and gradually trained up to youth; but at this point he is seized with a dreadful illness, which prevents him from remembering anything when he recovers. His limbs will no longer support his tottering frame; he cannot move from one spot to another; he utters inarticulate sounds, unintelligible to those around him, and his favourite authors, his talents, and his re-

Digitized by Google

collections are dead to him. But little by little his strength returns, and his patient mother guides the steps of her child, aids his utterance, shows him the words in books which he has forgotten, and leads him back to his former studies. His intelligence quickly expands anew, and everything which he learns is a recollection. He believes he knows it, and gradually remembers it, and the progress which he makes is rapid in proportion to the improvement in his health.

Thus it is with the fallen spirit. His spiritual progress is proportioned to the attention which he pays to his moral health, and this allows him to make rapid advances in the remembrance of his past acquisitions, which he believes to be fresh studies, until he has arrived at a point when the past can be unrolled before his eyes without inconvenience. He can make no fresh progress, which will then be really a new study, until he has arrived at the point which he quitted when he fell into the dark places of human incarnation.

§ 59. What are we to think of the theory which asserts that the incarnation of the formed spirit on the primitive and other earths until it has attained perfection, is not the punishment of a fault, but a necessity, as in the case of a spirit in course of development in the inferior kingdoms?

Human incarnation is not a necessity, but a punishment, and the punishment cannot precede the fault. We have also explained to you that the spirit is only humanized when its previous faults have rendered it liable to human incarnation; and it is then fitted for it, and is compelled to suffer the consequences.

This theory has been stated as follows: According to a theory which appears plausible at first sight, spirits have not been created for material incarnation, and their human materialization results from their own fault. This alone is enough to condemn the system; for if no spirit had fallen, there would be no men in this world, or in any other; and as the presence of man is needful for the material improvement of worlds, since he aids the general work by his intelligence and activity, and is consequently one of the indispensable adjuncts of Creation, God could not make the completion of his work dependent upon the eventual fall of his creatures; unless, indeed, he depended on there being a sufficient number of guilty spirits to people the worlds which have been and will be created; and such an idea is repugnant to common sense.

You may omit the last clause of the sentence. Common sense, on the contrary, would teach you that the omniscience

Digitized by Google

of God enables him to foresee that among the number of those whom he has created weak, simple, ignorant, but possessed of free will, there will always be some who will allow themselves to be seduced by the pride which springs from ignorance, and which leads to presumption, selfishness, and envy, and who will fall because they abuse their free will.

Is it more reasonable to suppose that God, who is represented to you as the type of all perfection, and the paragon of justice through all eternity, should have created feeble creatures expressly that they might gain strength by painful experience, and that he has created innocent beings in order to teach them to practise innocence by murder, outrage, and all the vices of the primitive human incarnations—vices which would then be inherent in the creature when it issued from the hands of the Creator, so that the thousands of ages which have passed have not been able to perfect it? The impetuous torrent of Time has rolled unceasingly over these rough and rugged boulders without being able to polish the surface, since so many outrages still afflict humanity, even at the present day.

God would then have given arbitrary freedom to the spirit on condition that its freedom should be subject to the uniform law of sin, and would thus inflict the same punishment of human incarnation upon the spirit who remained obedient to those entrusted with his guidance and development in the state of innocence and ignorance, and has followed the course marked out for his progress steadily and obediently, as upon the disobedient, proud, presumptuous, selfish, or envious spirit, who became guilty and rebellious, and fell, by the abuse of his free will.

Not so; God is great, just, good, and paternal. He has willed that his children should be born in simplicity of heart, and he has granted them freedom of action which they nearly always misuse. Then God, still leaving the spirit the use of its free will, withdraws himself from it to some extent, and abandons it to its own impressions. It then chooses its own course; and it is then, and then only,

Digitized by Google

that it suffers the consequences of its choice. All will come in time, and this truth will become plain like those of re-incarnation and the pre-existence of the soul. Everything prepares the way; one generation sows the seed, another reaps, and the third gathers in the harvest.

The omniscience of God enables him to foresee (the past, present, and future being always unrolled before him) that nothing shall ever be wanting to the universal life and harmony, and that there will always be a sufficient number of guilty spirits to dwell upon the worlds which he creates for their habitation, where they must expiate their offences, advance, and contribute to the material improvement of these worlds. The omniscience of God also enables him to foresee from all eternity that there will always be a sufficient number of spirits who were pure in the state of innocence and ignorance, and who obey their guides, and remain pure in the path of progress which is pointed out to them, without falling, to people all the fluidic worlds which he creates, and which are appropriate for the intelligences who are destined to dwell there, and to continue their progress in the fluidic state.

The author we have quoted continues: "Human incarnation is a necessity to the spirit, who accomplishes his providential mission, and works at his own advancement with the activity and intelligence which are necessary for his life and well-being; but human incarnation becomes a punishment when the spirit has neglected its duty, and is forced to begin its task afresh, and to multiply its corporeal existences, which have become painful to it by its own fault. A scholar can only obtain his degree after passing through all the preliminary examinations; and these examinations are not a punishment but a necessity. But he is punished, if his idleness compels him to repeat them, although the ability to pass them is a reward. It is therefore true that terrestrial incarnation is a punishment to many of its inhabitants, because they might have avoided it, whereas they have perhaps doubled, tripled, or quadrupled it by their own fault, and have thus retarded their entrance into better worlds. But it is false, in principle, to admit that human incarnation is a punishment."

On the contrary, it is false to assert that human incarnation is necessary for the fully developed spirit, in the stage of innocence and ignorance, and gifted with free will which he has never abused. If he has never fallen, and remained obedient to his guides, it is unnecessary; whereas it is

Digitized by Google

a necessity to the disobedient, guilty, and rebellious spirit, who has abused his free will and fallen. It is, therefore, false to assert that human incarnation is not, in principle, a punishment, being rendered necessary in consequence of a fault.

Those who drew up this erroneous proposition were either not sufficiently instructed, or have not reflected sufficiently on the nature and object of the worlds which are inhabited by incarnate spirits as worlds of expiation and progress, and on the origin of the spirit, its different stages of formation, and especially on the two well-marked conditions which must be very carefully distinguished from each other. In the one case the spirit is in course of formation, and advances continually, until it becomes a fully developed spirit possessed of independent intelligence, free will, the knowledge of its wishes and powers, and the realization of the liberty and consequent responsibility of its acts. In the other case the spirit is fully developed in the state of innocence and ignorance, and able either to use its free will to follow the path of progress with simplicity of heart, or to abuse it under the influence of pride, presumption, and envy, and consequently to be disobedient, guilty, and rebellious. It is thus free to stand or fall. Incarnation is necessary to spirit in course of formation. It is indispensable to its progress and development, to awaken and gradually develop the knowledge of its existence, which can only be effected through contact with matter. Intellectual development is due to the union of these two principles. Incarnation is a necessity until the spirit arrives at the point of intellectual development, and is ready to receive the precious but dangerous gift of free will.

We will now recapitulate what we have told you already (§ 56).

All spirits originally start from the same point. They are primarily formed of the essence of fluids which are so ethereal that no words could convey any idea of it to your limited intelligence. This is animated by the will of God to give it being, and constitutes the spiritual essence or

Digitized by Google

intelligent principle, destined to progress until it becomes a fully developed spirit, gifted with free will, and possessed of knowledge of its wishes, powers, and actions.

Incarnation or rather materialization of this spiritual essence in dead matter takes place, first in the mineral kingdom and in the intermediate species partaking of the nature of the mineral and the plant, and then in the vegetable kingdom, and in the intermediate species which partake of the nature of the plant and the animal. It thus follows a continuously progressive course, and attains a development which leads it on to the borders of the knowledge of life.

It is then incarnated in the animal kingdom, and subsequently in the species which are intermediate between the animal and man, so far as the material envelope is concerned. This continuous progress leads to the knowledge of active external life and its surroundings; and this intellectual development leads the spirit in course of formation to the preparatory period which precedes the attainment of that moral, independent, and responsible life which constitutes free thought.

When the spirits have arrived at the point of intellectual development, and receive the precious but dangerous gift of free will, they are all equally in the state of innocence and ignorance, and are clothed with a perisprit which covers the independent intelligence. They all undergo the fluidic incarnation which is constituted by this perisprit, and which may be called an envelope, from your material point of view.

They are all pure in the state of innocence and ignorance, and are subject to spirits who are entrusted with their guidance and development. They have freedom of action, and may consequently advance in the fluidic state, so as to pass from the stage of infancy and instruction to perfection by means of successive and continuous progress, like the student who is always obedient and attentive to the authority, advice, and lessons of his master, and passes all his examinations until he takes his degree. They may, on the contrary, commit some fault, and thus bring upon themselves

Digitized by Google

the punishment due to the guilty, but to the guilty alone, like the scholar who is disobedient and rebellious, and thus by his own fault brings on himself the punishment of expulsion, and is placed in a reformatory where he must pass his examinations among different conditions and surroundings until he also has taken his degree.

Many spirits fail, for nearly all abuse their free will; but some are obedient to those who are appointed to guide and develop them, and follow the path marked out for their progress. Those who fail suffer a punishment which they might have avoided. As soon as they are prepared to suffer the consequences of their fault by being humanized, they are subjected to human incarnation according to their degree of culpability, and under conditions suitable to their need of expiation and progress, either on the primitive worlds or on other worlds inhabited by spirits who have failed.

Human incarnation, in principle, is the punishment of the first fault which has led to a fall. Reincarnation is the punishment of backsliding, or a fresh fall, for all your existences are connected together, and every reincarnated spirit carries with him the secret penalty of his preceding incarnation.

Spirits who are obedient to those who are entrusted with their guidance and development do not fall, but continue their progress in the fluidic state. Both those who have fallen, and those who have remained pure, work at their own advancement by their activity and intelligence, and accomplish their providential mission in the great unity of Creation. Everything is reciprocal, and all spirits are linked together that they may raise themselves to God by wisdom, knowledge, and love, according to the general laws of progress.

The spirits who have fallen display their activity and intelligence in the state of incarnation, by preserving their life and well-being, and ultimately by the material improvement of the worlds which they inhabit. This is the material side; but they also labour at their moral and intellectual advancement, and at the moral and intellectual development of the human races which people these worlds.



Digitized by Google

Material incarnation is a punishment necessary for expiation and progress, and is succeeded by less and less material incarnations in more and more elevated worlds; for matter follows the progress of the spirit. The incarnations then become more and more fluidic, until the spirit has purified itself from all contact with the flesh, and returns to the superior regions, passing through the layers of air and worlds, learning on the one hand, and teaching on the other.

The spirits who remain pure also employ their activity and intelligence, to progress from the state of innocence and ignorance, infancy and instruction, to perfection. They are obliged to make great spiritual efforts to progress without falling, in the fluidic state; for the perisprit is matter to them, and renders their labour great, constant, and difficult; for although the perisprit is the means and instrument of their progress, it may also be the cause of their fall at any moment. It is actually so in the case of a spirit who has failed, and may be the cause of a fresh fall at any time; although it is the means and instrument of his progress in the human incarnations. Unfallen spirits exercise their activity and intelligence in proportion to the elevation which they have acquired by study and labour, in the maintenance of universal life and harmony, but always in the spiritual state, in worlds inhabited by incarnate spirits who have failed, and in worlds inhabited by spirits in the errant state, everywhere in space. The worlds are infinitely numerous. Their number and multiplication would astound you; and nothing could enable you, in the limited state of your intelligence, to understand their extent; but spirits are far more numerous.

When spirits have arrived at a certain degree of moral and intellectual development, both those who have hitherto remained unfallen, and those who have already fallen, are required to study the principles and organization of worlds. They commence these studies under the direction of perfectly pure spirits, whose origin is lost in the darkness of past eternities; and under their guidance they construct and develop the planets, and lead them from sphere to sphere towards the regions which are fitted for them. At

Digitized by Google

this moment many of them fall. either seduced by pride, and overlooking the directing hand of the Lord, or they question his power by mistrusting their own. The time of the human incarnation of the spirit, according to his merit, has then arrived; but the planet is not allowed to perish because the first architect has failed, but continues its progress under the supervision of a superior spirit, who takes the place of the fallen spirit, and continues his work.

We have been speaking of spirits who have already attained to some degree of knowledge, and are entrusted with the formation of planets; but even before arriving at this point many are hurled from the ether into gross matter, many turn aside at the very entrance of the path, and many have neither the courage to make the needful efforts nor to persevere after the first attempt.

But never forget that all spirits, whether fallen or unfallen, were originally equal at their starting-point, and will also be equal when they reach their goal. They will be equal in purity when they have become pure spirits, although they have pursued different paths, because it is rendered to each according to his works.

§ 60. You have told us that Mary and Joseph were both perfect spirits, but that Joseph was less elevated than Mary; while both were inferior to Jesus. What is the exact meaning of this, and why are some inferior to others in perfection?

God alone is perfect from all eternity. He alone is possessed of absolute perfection, and universal and infinite love and knowledge. He alone can say, "I will go no further," because he has attained the absolute limits of perfection from all eternity. It is he alone who has always existed, and having always known everything, has nothing to learn. The created spirit can never equal God; and as everything in the infinite vastness of the universe is always tending to progress, the spirit, whatever may be its intellectual advancement, has always more and more to learn, throughout the eternities. Intellectual progress is therefore indefinite; for every spirit has always something to learn in universal knowledge, without ever finding any limits.

Moral perfection is relative, like intellectual progress. A

Digitized by Google

spirit may be morally and intellectually perfect, relative to worlds inferior to that which he inhabits. A spirit may stand very high in the spiritual hierarchy as compared with yourselves, and may be morally and intellectually perfect as regards your planet, and may yet be very far from having attained the culminating point of perfection. He may still have to advance very far in universal knowledge before reaching it; and it is these whom you call superior spirits.

A spirit is perfect as compared to you and your planet when he has succeeded in subduing all human passions, and in divesting himself of all impurity of thought, and, consequently, of action. Such a spirit is animated by the most ardent and devoted love for all the creatures of the Lord, and is filled with reverence and adoration towards his Creator. He has reached the apex of love and devotion, but not of knowledge.

The culminating point of perfection is *sidereal perfection*. A spirit has attained to this when he has attained to moral and intellectual perfection relative to the higher or lower worlds, both material or fluidic, which are inhabited by fallen or unfallen spirits, until they have attained to the purely fluidic worlds, where the essence of the perisprit is completely purified; when the influence of matter over the spirit has become completely nullified, and it is no longer liable to incarnation upon any planet whatever. Sidereal perfection is only attained by pure spirits; but even these are not possessed of unlimited knowledge, for this belongs to God alone, and not even to those spirits whose knowledge is nearest to his; for no created spirit can ever equal God.

When the pure spirit has attained to moral infallibility, he is only intellectually infallible relatively, and through the aid of others, when he is deficient in some branches of knowledge which are necessary for the accomplishment of any mission; because, although he is morally perfect relatively to all spirits whomsoever, it is the will of God that he should always be aided and sustained by those who are his superiors in knowledge.

The hierarchy of knowledge among the pure spirits, who

Digitized by Google

are all equally pure, is only a principle of assistance proceeding from God alone, the sole source from whence all merit and power proceeds, and to whom it returns. But you may be very sure that although the pure spirit may still have much to learn before arriving at the extreme limits of universal knowledge in space, he is always morally and intellectually perfect, relatively to the planets which he visits.

God is the eternal essence of all life, the Supreme Intelligence, and Uncreated Creator; the First Cause, sovereignly intelligent and omnipotent. The pure spirits are intermediate between God and the superior spirits who are the ministers of the divine will; and thus act upon yourselves, by the mediation of good spirits, according to the spiritual hierarchy. These have all various tasks assigned them, and aid in the preparation, development, and guidance of everything which conduces to the universal life and harmony in all worlds whatever, whether inhabited by fallen or unfallen spirits, according to the natural and immutable laws which God has established in space.

Every world whatever has a protecting and ruling spirit—a Christ of God—the origin of whose perfection is lost in the darkness of bygone eternities, and who is infallible and unfallen. He has presided over the formation of his world, and is entrusted with its development and progress, and with that of all the spirits who inhabit it, that he may lead them to perfection. The missions of these Christs of God are relative to the degree and development of the planet. They preach love to such ungrateful worlds as yours; but in more elevated worlds they teach great discoveries, arts, and sciences. In all, they labour to awaken the sleeping instincts, according to the necessities and capacities of the planets which they direct. The Christs of God fulfil their missions with equal zeal, whatever may be the inferiority or superiority of the worlds which they govern; whether upon Mars, upon your earth, or Venus, or on Jupiter.

Those spirits who have arrived at sidereal perfection, after having fallen and been purified, always regard those

Digitized by Google

who have arrived at the same perfection without falling, with a species of love and reverence. But do not suppose that there is any line of demarcation between those who have fallen and those who have remained pure. Not so; they are equal in purity, devotion, and love. Let the men of your planet contend about the hierarchy of precedence and the inequality of social conditions: in the sight of God, whatever is equally pure, is equal.

We have said that the protecting and ruling spirits of the planets are infallible and unfallen. They are infallible because they are in direct and conscious sympathy with God, and receive his inspirations and wishes; and they are likewise superior in universal knowledge to the spirits who have also become pure after having fallen. Do not think that there is any partiality in this. God is all justice, and is incapable of partiality; but the spiritual hierarchy is based upon the elevation and progress of spirits. You can understand that the spirit who has pursued a uniform course ever since his origin, must always be further advanced in universal knowledge than the spirit who has become purified after having fallen; and it is natural that the most important missions in nature should be entrusted to the most advanced spirits.

We will now explain in what sense Mary and Joseph were both perfect spirits when they incarnated themselves on a mission. They were perfect spirits relative to you, for they were both morally and intellectually perfect as regards your planet, but not so, relatively to worlds superior to those which they had inhabited. They were superior spirits, and were very high in the spiritual hierarchy in comparison with yourselves; but they had not yet attained to the culminating point of perfection. They were good and devoted spirits, but had still much universal knowledge to acquire before attaining to sidereal perfection.

They were both spirits who had not remained pure, but who had been purified. Mary had undergone a semi-material incarnation on an elevated planet. We call it semi-material because the body was fluidic, thus participating in the

Digitized by Google

nature of the perisprit. You cannot understand the nature of these fluidic bodies in the superior worlds, any more than that of the perisprit, as long as you are not in a position to understand the nature of the fluids of which they are composed. Strictly speaking, the perisprit may be called semi-material, because, though itself fluidic, it can materialize itself at will. As compared with what you call matter, it is as vapour compared to water; matter etherealized, but still matter, and capable of assuming a compact appearance at times. You will only be able to understand this when your intelligence is sufficiently developed to penetrate the depths of ether which surround you.

In order to estimate the qualities of the air, you have analyzed, weighed, and measured it. The air was always around you, and yet how long you have required to accomplish even this!

Before you can understand the fluids which are diffused through space, and may be said to compose it, you must learn to rise into the regions where these fluids disengage heterogeneous particles. But before this the science of Aerostatics must have attained its acme of perfection, and as yet it is only passing through the first stages of its infancy. How many fruitless efforts have been already made to perfect it, and how many are yet to follow! Man will one day be master of the air as he is of the earth and water, and he will then only be able to understand it, because he will be able to study it. At present you see only the difficulties of guiding yourselves and of breathing, but these will be overcome. Before men can ascend to these elevated regions, it will be necessary for them to guard against the want of air to support life, and against currents which would be poisonous to humanity.

These are great difficulties; but man's intelligence was given him to be used. The horizon continually expands before him to incite him to unceasing progress. Let him advance without fear, for the studies of one man will be useful to others as well as to himself when the time has come. God wills that others should aid you, but that you your-

Digitized by Google

selves should also work. If man arms himself with the love of knowledge, and the desire of progress, he will be sustained by good spirits, and will one day attain a perfect knowledge of the matter around him. After this the matter which envelopes him will itself become modified to administer to his new requirements, and he will pass from study to study, and from progress to progress, until he shall attain to those happy regions where he will acquire all knowledge relating to your planet and the solar system.

Any comparison between the objects in your world and those in higher worlds must be incomplete, but if you would compare the fluidic bodies of the higher planets with matter which changes its nature under your eyes, you may compare the human body of your planet to water, and that of certain other planets to steam. Steam is still water, but water in such a condition that it can rise into the air and mingle with the clouds, instead of needing any support.

During the successive incarnations which follow yours, the body gradually loses its density, and becomes more and more aerial. The feet no longer adhere to the ground, and the body no longer needs to be carefully balanced. The higher planets are surrounded with an atmosphere corresponding with their nature, and just as sea-water floats a body more readily than fresh, thus the density of the air of these regions is greater than that of the bodies of the mortals who inhabit them.

The fault which Mary committed was very slight, even in comparison to the elevation which she had already attained without falling. It was so slight that you would be unable to see the least trace of a fault in it; but much is expected from those to whom much is given.

Mary was incarnated on one of those blessed worlds on which you rest your hopes. For you, poor unhappy creatures, it would indeed be an enviable recompense for which you should strain all your efforts; but this incarnation was nevertheless a punishment to Mary, for she left a more beautiful world.

You may compare this to the case of a man who has had

Digitized by Google

a competency left him, after having always lived in the greatest poverty. He is able to procure the ordinary pleasures of life, and rejoices in his good fortune. But it is otherwise with the man who has been cradled in a golden couch, all whose fancies have been satisfied, and who had no desire which was not immediately gratified. Is he not unhappy when he sees his resources fail, is forced to compound with his creditors, and loses part of his fortune? For he knows that he has committed a fault, and that he himself is to blame for what he has lost. But as any comparison between earthly things and those of higher worlds must be faulty, we wish you to accept the spirit and not the letter of our explanations.

Mary was purified by this incarnation, and without falling again, she resumed the simple and direct path of progress, which she is still following. She has not yet attained to the culminating point of sidereal perfection; but notwithstanding this, her present incarnations (a material term which we employ to make you understand her perispritic condition) are so far above your comprehension that you could not form any idea of them.

Joseph had fallen more seriously, and had first suffered several incarnations on your earth, and had subsequently been purified by successive incarnations in higher and higher worlds, when he incarnated himself to aid Jesus in his earthly mission. His present elevation is great, and he is a superior spirit, though his knowledge is inferior to that of Mary.

Both Mary and Joseph are spirits very far inferior to Jesus. They are spirits who are morally and intellectually perfect with reference to you and your planet, but have still to advance very far in universal knowledge before arriving at sidereal perfection. After they have attained it, and become pure spirits, they must still advance continually in knowledge, for no spirit can ever exhaust its limits. Everything in universal nature is always progressing; but this is too far above your limited intelligence to be intelligible to you.

Jesus is a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, and one

Digitized by Google

of the greatest spiritual essences next to God. His knowledge is so vast that your limited intelligence could form no idea of it, and even the superior spirits cannot comprehend its extent. An innumerable company of pure spirits admire his knowledge, and labour to acquire it throughout the eternities; but even Jesus himself was still studying when he descended among you, although he was then the very type of love and wisdom. He is still studying, even now, for the spirit knows no end but progress, and only God can say, "I will go no further;" for he alone has attained the supreme limit from all eternity.

Do not suppose from this that Jesus had, or could have, any trials. He was and is unfallen and infallible; for he is in constant and direct sympathy with God, because his perfect purity enables him to approach the centre of all purity. He was and is his Word to you, and may be called your God in the sense that he is your Master and King, through and for his God and your God; his Father and your Father; for he is the protecting and ruling Spirit of your planet. He was, and ever is, inspired by the love of progress, and labours incessantly to acquire fresh knowledge in the book of infinity; for God alone has nothing to learn.

When your planet was entrusted to Jesus, he was a pure spirit, unfallen and infallible, but he has increased his own knowledge by working at the progress of your earth; and his ascending course corresponds with yours; for God rewards the love and devotion of every spirit, however advanced he may be, by giving him more and more knowledge in return for the progress which he has effected. Consequently the personal progress of every spirit corresponds with the progress which he helps his brethren to accomplish.

The love and devotion of Jesus cause him to constantly make still more ardent efforts to lead you on the path that you should follow to perfection. Your earth originally sprang from incandescent and impure fluids; and gradually attained its material condition by successive phases of planetary-revolutions. It will pass through phases of new revolutions, from material to less and less material, and

Digitized by Google

finally fluidic conditions, until it becomes purely fluidic. Then Jesus himself, though always a perfectly pure spirit, will be superior in knowledge to what he had attained when he presided over the formation of the globe; or when he visited it eighteen centuries ago; or to what he now possesses in consequence of his devotion to you.

Everything which has been, is, or will be, in all the kingdoms of nature on your planet, follows an ascending course in the path of physical, moral and intellectual progress, under the operation of spirit action, according to the eternal and immutable laws of God. But during the great work of the purification of your planet and its humanity, the chaff will be separated from the wheat, at the time predicted for the regeneration of your world, when it can no longer be the dwelling-place of any but good spirits. The spirits who remain obstinately guilty or rebellious will be removed, and banished to inferior planets, where they will have to expiate their persistence in evil and their wilful blindness throughout long ages.

Mary and Joseph, like ourselves, continue to aid Jesus in his mission by assisting you to accomplish your destiny under his direction. You can understand that when you are about to attain to perfection, the spirits belonging to the band who aided Jesus in his earthly mission, will have attained to sidereal perfection, and taken their rank among the pure spirits.

MATTHEW IV.—VERSES 1–11. MARK I. VERSES 12, 13. LUKE IV.—VERSES 1–13.

Fasting and Temptation of Jesus.

Matth. iv. (1) Then was Jesus led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted by the devil. (2) And having fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards hungry. (3) And the tempter came to him, and said, If thou be the son of God, command that these stones may be made bread. (4) But he answered and said, It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (5) Then the devil taketh him into the holy city, and setteth him upon the pinnacle of the Temple, (6) And saith unto him, If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall

Digitized by Google

bear thee up, lest thou shouldst ever dash thy foot against a stone. (7) Jesus said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (8) Again the devil taketh him to a very high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, (9) And saith unto him, I will give thee all these things, if thou wilt fall down, and worship me. (10) Then Jesus saith unto him, Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (11) Then the devil departeth from him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Mark i. (12) And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness, (13) And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was among the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

Luke iv. (1) And Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. (2) Being tempted by the devil for forty days. And he ate nothing during those days, and when they were ended, afterwards he was hungry. (3) And the devil said to him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. (4) And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. (5) And the devil, bringing him to a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the civilized world in a moment of time. (6) And the devil said to him, I will give thee all this power, and their glory, for it is delivered unto me, and I give it to whoever I please. (7) Therefore if thou wilt humble thyself before me, all shall be thine. (8) And Jesus answering said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and thou shalt serve him only. (9) And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down from hence. (10) For it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee. (11) And they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou shouldst ever dash thy foot against a stone. (12) And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (13) And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

§ 61. Satan, the devil, or the demon, is a figurative expression which stands for the whole company of evil spirits, eager for the ruin of man. Satan was not the name of any particular spirit, but represented a whole band of evil spirits who descended among men at that period to turn them aside from the ways of the Lord. Most of these, however, are now purified. Satan still exists, for evil spirits still persecute men, and still lead them aside from the ways of the Lord.

But all, like yourselves, will be purified in time, by means of a series of trials and expiations in successive reincarnations, each of which will be preceded, in the case of guilty spirits, by expiations in space, in the errant state, consisting

Digitized by Google

of moral sufferings or tortures, appropriate and proportioned to the faults or crimes which they have committed. The guilty spirit, whether in the errant or incarnate state, finds in these, hell, purgatory, expiation, reparation, and progress.

Reincarnation is the holy ladder which all men must mount. Its steps are the phases of different existences which must be passed through, first in the inferior, and then in the superior worlds, before arriving at the summit; for God has proclaimed by his celestial messenger, your Master and ours, the Protector and Ruler of your planet, that no one can come to him without being born, dying, and being born again, until he has arrived at the limits of perfection; and no one among men can come to him without being purified by reincarnation. O, men, you have done well to submit yourselves to the powerful influence of progress. Progress is taking place daily, though slowly; and reincarnation, aided by Spiritism, will stimulate it, and give it a sublime impetus.

The fasting and temptation of Jesus were figurative, as we will explain to you. They were only real in the eyes of men, owing to the comments which the disciples and apostles made upon the teachings of Jesus after his earthly mission was completed. Jesus spoke to the people of the temptations which beset humanity, and the snares spread for them by evil spirits, as well as of the necessity of resisting them with faith and perseverance. But the subsequent comments of the disciples, who were influenced by the prejudices of their age and their Hebrew traditions, led them to imagine, when they considered the circumstances under which the discourse had been delivered, that it was a narrative of what Jesus had himself experienced. Hence the evangelists Matthew and Luke wrote the narrative of an actual fasting and of material temptations to which Jesus had been subjected by Satan.

This event, which religious authorities consider to be real and material, is an emblem. How was it possible for the mind of man thus to degrade one of whom he made a portion of God; a part of the great All who governs the

Digitized by Google

universe; an opinion which returns partially to pantheistic ideas? How could men debase this portion of the Divine Being so low as to bring him in contact with the demon, the outcast of heaven, who was driven away by this very God, a portion of whom is reduced to parley with the proud and powerful exile, to such an extent as even to put himself in his power? How can it be supposed that if Jesus was human, and therefore subject to the infirmities and necessities of human existence, he could have lived forty days and nights in the desert without taking food? How can it be supposed that Jesus, being God, felt the pangs of hunger after forty days and nights to such an extent as to encourage the audacious assaults of this fallen angel, who could only be forced to abandon his prey (the demoniacs) under the powerful action of the will of Jesus? How could man be so proud on the one hand, and so inconsistent on the other, as to give himself a God as his Saviour, and to subject this God to the dominion of the demon, by putting him in his power, and subjecting him to his contact and influence to tempt him?

O poor humanity! seeking for wonders in the simplest things and rejecting those which are most obvious as impossible, and thus ignorantly degrading him to whom their superstitions assign a share of the divinity, and putting him at the mercy, both now and hereafter ("the demon departed from him *for a season*"), of him who is said to be "cursed to all eternity, with no hope of pardon or wish for repentance, and who fights against the Creator with strength, will and power?"

Yet you must not find fault with this, for there was a reason for the belief in a material temptation, as we shall presently explain; and all that occurred was to take place in the course of events.

Everything has its end and object in the succession of events which always take place at the right time; and human interpretations are always conformed to the state of intelligence, the requirements of the age, and the necessities of each period. Each of these interpretations represents

Digitized by Google

one of the stages which man must pass through in order to advance continually in the path of progress, gradually perceiving more and more of light and truth, as he is prepared to do so, for these are revealed to men in such proportion as they can bear, so as to enlighten them without their being dazzled.

If you follow the apparent human life of Jesus, by which he constantly preached devotion, charity, and love by example, and trace his actions, words, and teachings, you will see that he always conformed himself, so far as his earthly mission required, to Jewish customs, habits, and traditions. His language was appropriate to these, and to the intelligence of the men whom he addressed, that they might understand, or at least listen to it; and thus he ensured the success of his mission, and caused his discourse to yield fruits both for the present and for the future; fruits first of the letter and then of the spirit.

You know that the prophets prepared themselves for their mission by meditation, prayer, and fasting in the desert. Jesus appeared to human eyes to conform to this custom or tradition before publicly commencing his mission. After his baptism, he disappeared for the traditional space of forty days and nights, which the Hebrews regarded as, in some sense, sacred; and this added to the impression which had already been made upon the people. But instead of going into the desert, he returned (as was his constant practice when the necessities of his earthly mission allowed him to absent himself from the eyes of men) to the superior regions, where, surrounded by celestial splendours, he governs, and will continue to govern, your planet, until it has attained to its fluidic degree, and he has led you to perfection.

After the forty days and nights he returned among men, and addressed the people and his disciples, who had noticed his absence, and now assembled round him, in the following terms:—

"Verily I say unto you, If the devil should say to you, 'Listen to my advice, and submit to my will, and I will give you all the kingdoms of the earth:' resist him. Have you

Digitized by Google

not a much greater kingdom, the kingdom of God, your Father?

"If you are pressed by hunger, and the devil should say to you, 'Obey me, and I will make bread of these stones to nourish you;' refuse him with horror. The bread of earth only feeds the body, and you should seek after the bread of life, which feeds the soul, and fits it to enter into eternal life.

"If pride should lead you to the summit of greatness, and the devil should say to you, 'Cast yourself into the space around you, and fear nothing, for you will be upheld,' put him to silence, and do not tempt God, but consider within yourselves; reflect on your weakness and the greatness of the Lord; trust in him, and the devil will leave you for a time, but do not forget that he is always roving about, ready to seize his prey, and to profit by all your weaknesses."

These are the words which Jesus pronounced when he reappeared, and which the Master has enjoined us to reveal to you. Apply them to yourselves, for, like all his other sayings, they must bear fruit in the present and in the future, as they bore fruit in the past, under the emblematic figure of a material temptation. These words were handed down by oral tradition, as was then the case with everything.

Some of the apostles and disciples had heard these words spoken, while others had only heard them reported; but during the earthly mission of Jesus, their minds were constantly occupied by fresh events. It was only after the accomplishment of his mission that the events which had attracted their attention were represented as a whole, and that the evangelists recorded what Jesus said after he had disappeared for forty days and nights, as well as the events which had preceded, accompanied and followed his disappearance. Then they began to reflect upon these events, and their comments finally led to the belief that Jesus had practised a material fast in the desert, where he was tempted by Satan.

The apostles and disciples, like all who embraced the Christian religion, believed this to be an outward event.

Digitized by Google

They were men, or incarnate spirits, and were consequently imbued with the prejudices, beliefs, and traditions of their age.

Tradition required that every prophet should withdraw into the desert to fast before commencing his mission; and as the words of Jesus were spoken after his absence of forty days and nights, they supposed that what he taught respecting those temptations of the devil to which man is subjected by hunger, pride and ambition; the snares laid for him by evil spirits; and the perseverance and faith with which they ought to be opposed, were a narrative of what he had himself experienced during this period. Consequently, they supposed that he had fasted in the desert for forty days and nights, after which he was hungry, and was then tempted by the devil in the very words which he had spoken to the people.

Material facts are necessary for material men. Men regarded Christ as a human being, subject to the infirmities and necessities of human existence; and they could understand nothing but physical trials, especially at that age. At a later period, the revelation which the angel made to Mary and Joseph respecting the divine origin of Jesus was revealed to the multitude. After this, all regarded him as literally the son of God, and this accounted for his life of perfect purity, the miracles which he performed, and his resurrection and ascension.

The apostles and disciples regarded Jesus as subject to the infirmities and necessities of human existence, and to the temptations of the devil; although the events of his earthly mission led them to look upon him as a great prophet. The new ideas which they received after the accomplishment of his mission, led them to regard him as greater than all the prophets who had appeared on earth; the Son of God, and, as all his disciples thought, sharing in the divinity of his Father. Being liable to suffer temptation, he had been subjected to it, and had triumphed over it. As they regarded the teachings of Jesus as a narrative of real events which had passed between the devil and himself during his

Digitized by Google

absence or disappearance, they arranged a dialogue between them accordingly. Although the exact words which Jesus had pronounced had vanished from the memory of men, the idea and essence of the teaching remained. The apostles and disciples therefore had recourse to writing to preserve the dialogue according to the sense and essence of the teaching.

If you compare the exact words pronounced by Jesus with the version which arose under the influence of tradition and commentary, you will see that the idea and essence are the same. The allegory is presented in such a form that it may be taken literally, though it should be spiritualized by the intelligence. The lesson which Jesus intended to convey is still there, but converted into a real and material temptation, which the devil practised upon Jesus, who had undergone this experience, and, being both man and the son of God, was able to overcome it.

The hunger ascribed to Jesus, and his being carried away first to a high mountain, and then to the pinnacle of the temple at Jerusalem, were the result of comments. Jesus had disappeared for forty days and forty nights, during which his disciples and apostles supposed that he had retired into the desert to fast, according to the traditions, and was afterwards hungry. As they supposed that his words were a literal narrative of his own temptation by the devil, it was also needful for the devil to carry Jesus to two lofty places, first to show him all the kingdoms of the world, and second, placing him at the material summit of human greatness, to tell him to cast himself into space, or to throw himself down.

You must not forget the ignorance and simplicity of the men or incarnate spirits of that period relative to the system of the world, when they made these comments. The apostles and disciples regarded a high mountain, and the pinnacle of the temple at Jerusalem, as the most convenient places, and did not comprehend that there could be any others. They thought that a high mountain was the only place where the devil could have carried Jesus, to be able to show him all the kingdoms of the world. When they

Digitized by Google

gave a material sense to the words of the Master, relative to the summit of human greatness, where the devil placed Jesus in order to say to him, "Cast thyself down from hence, and fear no fall, for you will be upheld," the only place which they could conceive of as corresponding to this idea by elevation in space was the summit of the temple of Jerusalem. Those who believed accepted the facts, so far as their faculties permitted them, as they still accept them; but the incredulous rejected them, as is still the case, without further inquiry.

All is foreseen, and takes place in accordance with the universal law which governs worlds in the path of progress, and which always corresponds in the course of events, as in human interpretations, to the state of intelligence and the necessities of each period; but man is possessed of free will. God knows the use which he will make of it; for everything which you call the past, the present, and the future, is always, and to all eternity, unrolled before his face.

Man is always in possession of his free will, and at liberty to choose between the true thought gradually dawning on the minds of some, and the false, though useful thought. But man is drawn aside by his natural predilections, as when he preferred the sacrifice of a God to increase his own importance, instead of the sacrifice of a prophet; just as the material temptation of Jesus by Satan renewed his courage, and showed him his path, when he whom he regarded as a man-God had been subjected to temptation; for Jesus, although the son of God, and a portion of the Divine, was a man at the same time, and thus being subject to the infirmities of human existence, was accessible to the devil, and personally suffered the trial which he was able to overcome.

Nothing takes place without the will of God, in the sense that if he desired to interfere with human actions, his will alone would be sufficient. But the end and consequence of all things are always before him; and he never interferes with the destinies, thoughts and actions, of any one before-

Digitized by Google

hand. He does not govern like a tyrant, but permits everything to take its course. By leaving every one his free will and independence, he aids humanity to guide itself, and to walk in the path of progress by successive and always progressive revolutions, which react upon the course of events, and link them together. As these are always appropriate to the state of intelligence and to the necessities of the time, they develop the progress already made in the present, and prepare for fresh advances in the future.

If God had desired, he could certainly have employed spirit manifestations and medianimic action to show the apostles, disciples and evangelists, the falsity of the interpretation which converted a lesson which Jesus delivered to the people into a narrative of an actual fasting and temptation, which he himself passed through in the desert. But the necessities of the period required that they should be left in this belief; for it was needful that the masses should comprehend it.

If men had only considered the perfection necessary to attain to God, and the visible and ever-victorious perfection of Jesus, how greatly they would have been discouraged had they not been warned beforehand that the strongest may be liable to temptation! And what strength have they not derived from this example of the will being always able to repulse the inspirations of evil! They would never have dared to hope to attain to the ideal which was set before them, and when they found it too high for them, they would have rested on the surface of the ground; whereas, seeing him subjected to temptation, and coming forth a conqueror through faith, all might hope for the same reward.

Thus, the temptation of Jesus is a figure due to the necessities and the state of intelligence of the age, and the natural aspirations which attracted men, and it was likewise preparatory to the future. We have revealed to you the real nature of Jesus, to whom all spirits are subject, and who showed himself omnipotent over the demons, during his earthly mission, even to your eyes. He had not to

Digitized by Google

suffer the influence and still less the contact with evil spirits, and there is not a word in his teachings which could permit you to say so, or even to imagine it.

The forty days and nights which Jesus was represented in the parable as passing in the desert, are an emblem of human life. During this short space of time man is attacked by all its evil passions, and feels all its necessities, and it is for him to rise triumphant over the trial.

Therefore, beloved ones, act as you were taught by Jesus in the words which we have just revealed to you at his bidding. Act as you are taught by this emblematic figure of material temptation, which was designed to embody the teaching contained in his words. Triumph over the passions, and even the necessities of humanity by trusting everything to God. Worship and serve God only, and the spirits of the Lord will descend to aid you to ascend to the heavens.

Every man whomsoever, upon your earth, is liable to be tempted by evil spirits, who are too ignorant to discern those who are able to resist them. Even those who are incarnated among you on a mission are not exempt from their attacks. The words of Jesus to the people, and the parable which represents him as exposed to a material temptation, are sufficient to show you all how to act. The temptations and evil influences which are most dangerous to man are pride, the material appetites, and the ambition which is inflamed by these evil passions. Unhappily, the best intentions in principle break against these rocks, especially among those to whom God has granted the favour of incarnating themselves to contribute to the advancement of their brethren.

Learn to resist the attempts of the evil spirits, and to keep yourselves worthy of the favour which God has granted you in sending you the divine model in whose steps you should constantly endeavour to tread. Learn to show yourselves worthy of the favour which he has granted to you in opening the era of the new revelation, and sending his good spirits to develop your judgment, and enlighten your hearts

Digitized by Google

and intelligence. They bring you light and truth, and teach you the reverence, gratitude and love which you owe to God your Creator, and after him to his Christ, your protector, ruler and master. They come to teach you patience, resignation, gentleness, benevolence, simplicity of heart, humility of mind, chastity, according to the laws of nature, frugality, temperance, sobriety, disinterestedness, justice, tolerance, devotion, and love and charity towards your brethren. They come to teach you the love of labour and of knowledge, and the desire of progress, according to physical, moral and intellectual order; love for all the creatures of the Lord which he has entrusted to your hands to be employed for your use, according to the measure of your needs, or to be destroyed for your safety, but never to be abused. They come to instruct you in all duties and virtues, and to inspire you to practise them.

Learn to show yourselves worthy of the favour which God has shown you in sending his good spirits to teach you to resist the allurements of matter, and to distinguish good from evil in spirit and in truth. They come to reveal the secrets of the other world, and the source and character of good and evil influences. Your guardian angel and other good spirits always endeavour to inspire you with their good influences, whenever you are disposed to receive them, and it is possible for them to make themselves heard; but your evil impulses are due to the inspirations of wicked and impure spirits, who wander about, always ready to seize their prey, and to profit by all your weaknesses.

Watch and pray, therefore. Watch, by exerting a constant vigilance over your thoughts, words, and actions. Pray, not with the lips, but with the heart, to attract good influences towards you, and that God may grant you the protection of good spirits who will help you to practise all the duties and virtues which the Spirit of Truth has come to preach to you through the spirits of the Lord.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN.

With the concurrence of the Apostles.

Digitized by Google

§ 62. What do you mean by saying, when speaking of the opinion which makes Jesus a portion of God, "an opinion which returns partially to pantheistic ideas?"

Does not the doctrine which you call Pantheism make everything proceed from the same principle, to which everything also returns and is reabsorbed, to begin anew these perpetual divisions and reunions in the revolutions of the universal machine? On a smaller scale, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are represented as portions of God, dividing from the All, and yet forming only one with him. It is a variation of the theme of Pantheism.

The events on the banks of the Jordan illustrate the opinion which thus makes Jesus and the Holy Spirit two portions of God, according to pantheistic ideas. God is there divided into three portions; (1) Jesus, in a human body like yours, subject to the necessities of human existence, and the human infirmities of life and death; (2) the Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus in the bodily form of a dove; (3) God, from whom the two other portions were thus separated, causing his voice to be heard from heaven, and saying to Jesus, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." After the two portions of God were divided from the great Whole, they return and mingle with him, to form one only. If we cannot rank such an opinion with pantheistic ideas, it must be classed with the pagan notion of a plurality of Gods.

This opinion is instinctively repudiated by the reason of man, and is called a mystery. It was the result of false human interpretations, due to ignorance both of the spiritual origin of Jesus and of the true meaning of the term Holy Spirit.

The New Revelation has now taught you that God is the one and only universal but indivisible Principle, who creates, but not by the divisibility of his essence; for God is One. Jesus is a created spirit, whose origin and starting-point were the same as those of all other spirits, but who is a pure spirit, and has attained to perfection without ever having fallen. The Holy Spirit is a figurative expression, denoting,

Digitized by Google

either collectively or individually, the pure, superior, and good spirits, who are the ministers of the will of God in their hierarchical order, and are the organs of his inspiration to man.

§ 63. How are we to understand the words, "Man is always possessed of free will. God knows the use which he will make of it, for what yon call the past, present and future is unrolled before him to all eternity?"

Do you acknowledge the divine prescience, or do you degrade the Supreme Intelligence to the level of your own? If there was any influence controlling free will, free will could not exist. When a machine is constructed, the results of its action are foreseen, and everything takes place as was designed; but if an unskilful or careless workman gets between the cogs, or if a curious spectator approaches to examine it more closely, or touches a wheel, he is liable to be drawn into the machinery, and crushed, or otherwise injured. The maker had nothing to do with it either directly or indirectly, although he knew that if anybody should act thus, he would suffer in consequence. If he saw a rash man going too near, he would exclaim, "Take care, for you are in danger."

Distant as this comparison is, where or what fatality is there in reference to the order which guides the movement of the machine, and the men around it. Man in his pride and ignorance would like the Lord to take part in all his actions. Each of you, poor worms, wishes the Supreme Intelligence to descend to his level, and to take him by the hand. Ah, take a broader view of the greatness of your Creator! The Lord reigns over all the universes and illumines all their dark places. He exerts a superior guiding and governing influence, but leaves your free will full liberty to act amid the various conflicting physical and spiritual influences at work around you, amidst and under the control of general laws which he has immutably established through all eternity. This superior influence guides and governs by the universal spiritual action which is the agent of his Providence, and acts amid these laws under their dominion,

Digitized by Google

and within their limits, according to his omnipotent and immutable will. This influence continually leads you in the path of progress under the independent action of your free will, whether obedient or rebellious.

The whole is unrolled before God from all eternity. The past, present and future are words invented for your necessities, and are meaningless to him. He is He who Is, from all eternity. Can you not understand that while he permits man the freedom of his will, and of his thoughts and actions, his piercing gaze perceives at the same time what use man will make of his liberty?

The engineer who sees a rash, unskilful, or curious man coming near his machinery, can tell beforehand the consequences which may follow his imprudence, but his limited intelligence will not tell him whether the man will commit any act of imprudence or not. He cannot read his thoughts or follow their course; for he always sees a past, present and future in the use of free will, however slight the interval between may appear to him.

But past, present and future are nothing to God, and are all before him without a break. He reads the thought of man, sees the action of his will, and also sees before him in one view the course and consequences of all things, and knows the use which man will make of his free will, for everything is eternally and continuously instantaneous to God.

No comparison can be made between the brilliant sun shining in its full splendour, and the pale sparkle reflecting it and then dying away, when the light falls for a moment on a brook. As little can we compare the vast being who sheds light on all which exists, and your feeble intelligences. We repeat that the divine prescience is a faculty which it is impossible for you to analyze.

§ 64. How was the tangible perispritic body of Jesus kept alive and nourished?

We have told you that Jesus assumed a body analogous to those of the superior worlds. It was of a similar perispritic nature, but rendered more material by being combined

Digitized by Google

with the fluids which surround your planet. This body was consequently gifted with the same properties and the same means of life and nutrition as those of the superior spirits.

The needs and requirements of material life and nutrition to which your human bodies are subjected, disappear when the purified spirit has attained a sufficient degree of moral and intellectual elevation to be freed from all contact with the flesh, and undergoes incarnation, or, more correctly, incorporation, in the superior worlds. The modes and necessities of life and nutrition then correspond with the surroundings of the spirit which is clothed with a perispritic body. The body, like the perisprit, in the nature of which it participates, then draws the materials of life and nutrition which it requires from the surrounding fluids, which it assimilates, and which are sufficient to sustain its constituent principles. This assimilation of the surrounding fluids which effects nutrition and sustains life, takes place according to laws which regulate these fluids, and which you cannot yet understand. The nature of these fluids, the laws which regulate them, their properties, uses, and functions, will not be explained until the time has come. It is not reserved for you to enter into these details. Let it suffice you to observe that on such material worlds as yours, the union of matter is necessary to the formation of matter. Man is clothed with a material human envelope, formed by the material laws of reproduction, and requires material nourishment drawn from the vegetable and animal kingdoms.

Man has two coverings: one fluidic, which we have called the perisprit, which forms after death the fluidic body which constitutes the human individuality of the spirit; and the other material, which is restored to matter as a corpse after death, and forms what you call the human body.

Man has appropriate organs to assimilate the elements required for the life and nutrition of these two envelopes. One set effect the material nourishment of the body by means of liquid and solid food, combined with the fluids which are requisite and necessary; and the other set absorb the sur-

Digitized by Google

rounding fluids which are needful for the life and nutrition of the perisprit, or fluidic envelope. Material nourishment is therefore only necessary and possible for man when he is clothed with a material body in the material worlds. When the spirit is incarnated, or rather fluidically incorporated, in material worlds where the body is of a perispritic nature, life and nutrition is effected by the absorption of the appropriate surrounding fluids. The plant has no need to eat or drink, yet it absorbs, either from the earth or the air, the essences and fluids which are essential to its existence.

When the spirit is in the errant state, or clothed with a perispritic body, there is no need or possibility for it to eat and drink like you. It then maintains its existence by absorbing the surrounding fluids which are necessary to sustain the constituent principles of the perisprit in the errant state; and in the state of incarnation or incorporation, those needed to sustain the perisprit, and the fluidic body which participates in its nature, and is assimilated to it, being entirely composed of fluids; and this, unlike your material bodies, is not liable to corruption.

We will now further explain what we told you in § 14. The body which Jesus assumed was only a premature example of the human frame, as it will exist, some ages hence, in certain parts of your planet, for the incarnation of spirits who have then arrived at a sufficient degree of elevation. Let true science (that is, a science which does not remain stationary from prejudice at one point) observe what has taken place in the past, and the gradual course of events in the future; and it will discover the material forerunners of these organisms which still appear to you impossible at present.

Man (speaking here of the species and not of the sex, otherwise we should specially and chiefly speak of woman as possessed of a more advanced organization); man, we say, will become physiologically modified, the influence of matter will become more feeble, the nervous system more developed, the intelligence more advanced, often beyond the physical strength (as you say, sometimes, that the sword wears out the scabbard); and at last the spirit will triumph

Digitized by Google

over matter. The flesh will diminish in proportion as the nervous system is developed, and in many organisms the animal vital force will be replaced by the spirito-nervous force. These will be the premonitory symptoms which will forewarn you of the change which is about to take place in you.

The system will be purified little by little; the thick blood which flows in your veins will become more and more mingled with the vital fluid which will replace the corruptible molecules, and the nervous system will develop and encroach on the fleshly envelope until the latter is reduced to a mere shell, and will finally disappear altogether, to be replaced by a tangible fluidic envelope, which will dissolve without suffering or violence. When the nerves have arrived at this point of development, they will resemble the webs of gossamer on which the spiders float in the air in autumn; their nature will gradually change, as they are more and more encroached upon by the nervo-vital fluid; they will become more supple as they diminish in volume; their sensibility will increase in proportion to this diminution, and they will finally harmonize with the envelope which covers them, and combine to form what we may call, to enable you to understand it, a tangible perisprit, or body like that of certain elevated planets.

We can easily make you understand the life and nutrition of such a body. Are there not some insects so constituted that it is sufficient for their organs to nourish the body with the pure air around them, and the substances which you cannot perceive, which are contained in the dew as it falls drop by drop on the leaves, which they do not drink, but the emanations from which they inhale? Such is the organism of the spirit when it assumes a body similar to that of Jesus; but this perispritic body was as gross as it was possible for his spiritual nature to assume.

In this form of incarnation or incorporation, absorption is effected by the pores as well as by respiration. The whole being is nourished by the subtle substances which surround it, penetrate it, and minister to its requirements.

Digitized by Google

Little by little you will see instances of this. You will first meet with persons whom you will regard as abnormal phenomena, who content themselves with so little nourishment that it would seem impossible for them to survive; others who will sustain life on water only, or on some other insipid liquid; and, finally, others who will reverse all ordinary rules, and require no nourishment at all. Such phenomena will show themselves imperfectly at first, and will appear to be cases of disease.

These cases will perplex scientific men, who will study and experiment, without finding the clue to the mystery. Such cases will afterwards become more numerous, and it will finally be acknowledged that certain abnormally constituted beings can exist independently of known organic laws. At a later period it will be perceived that the exceptions are becoming so numerous as to reverse the former rule. Spread the knowledge of magnetism, and predispose coming generations to the emancipation of the spirit; refine matter; purify the blood by charging it with fluids; and you will aid in the emancipation of the spirit, and its victory over matter.

But this must take place gradually, for this condition cannot yet be maintained in ordinary humanity. At present, a few cases of sickness alone present you with such phenomena. These are the first indications which always precede the crisis of general transformation. On account of the present condition of the atmosphere, and the organs adapted to it, the cases which now fall under your notice are cases of disease, or are regarded as such, because, apart from the acknowledged laws regulating the performance of the bodily functions, those who attempt to exist thus, do not possess the requisite constitution, and the nourishment derived from the surrounding air is still insufficient for the grossness of the organism, which exhausts itself at length by its efforts to absorb and assimilate these fluids.

Such cases already appear at rare intervals. They will gradually become more numerous until the majority of the spirits who people your planet are sufficiently elevated to emancipate themselves from material necessities. Then those

Digitized by Google

who are materially incarnated will be looked upon as inferior beings until they have also succeeded in reaching the same elevation. This can only be accomplished gradually, like all transformations, and your planet will be subjected to the same law of progression, and will change its alimentary principles. The elements of material nourishment will become scarcer and scarcer; the manner in which man abuses everything which he touches, will destroy the animals, the edible plants, the trees, and even the flowers.* Man will gradually be deprived of the material resources with which the earth supplies him, and will seek a remedy for these privations in science. He will then invent new kinds of food, produced by chemical combinations. He will extract the material particles which he can assimilate to his organism from the fluids around, as he has drawn heat from wood, light from coal and force from air. He will study the means of living without material nourishment, and succeeding generations will be born with purer organisms, gradually becoming less material and more fluidic, which will lead you on to the period of which we have spoken.

Never forget that the temperance, chastity, and purity of the parents influences the organisms of the children, both by attracting more elevated spirits, and also by providing them with a purer and more flexible corporeal envelope. There is no caprice or chance in the course of progress and transformation. The spirits who are thus incarnated, and whom you regard as abnormally constituted, are more or less elevated spirits, whose mission it is to call the attention of science to certain questions, and to provide the groundwork for future edifices. We may observe, in conclusion, that it will be easy to perceive the transformation which will take place in external nature. This will be effected when the means of material aliment become rarer and rarer (and it

* Fantastic as this statement may appear to some, it is literally true, not in Europe only, but in all settled parts of the world. Some dried specimens of Australian flowers were exhibited at a meeting of the Linnean Society of London in the spring of 1880; and it was stated that they had now become so rare that it was exceedingly difficult to obtain specimens at all.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

already begins to grow difficult to procure sufficient food supplies), and man will be obliged to change the food on which he subsists. He will call art and chemistry to his aid to sustain life on other substances. This will result in the production of artificial food, which will first derange the animal economy, and lead to diseases and infirmities. But in succeeding generations the diseased organs of the parents will gradually become modified in the children, and adapted to the new requirements of humanity. The organs will then also become more sensitive, and will more readily appropriate themselves to the nutritious particles suspended in the atmosphere. At length the cataclysms which your planet must inevitably undergo in order to effect its physical reconstruction, will assist the development of these new digestive faculties.

§ 65. What took place when Jesus appeared to take food?

He was surrounded by an incalculable number of obedient and devoted superior spirits. They caused the food which he was supposed to take to disappear in such a manner that it appeared to be consumed by Jesus, by enveloping it with fluids which rendered it invisible, and they then removed and dispersed it in such a manner that it might serve for the necessities of other creatures.

If you trace the course of the earthly mission of Jesus, you will see that during the whole period of his mission, whether before or after his "resurrection," he rarely appeared to take food, and then only when it was necessary either to convince men of his humanity (which it was necessary for them to believe in, that his mission should be accepted, and succeed), or else to give them a lesson of temperance, or to set them an example of charity, pardon, and love.

The disciples of Jesus felt no surprise at his mode of life. They saw him pray, and as fasting was rigorously enjoined among the Jews, they believed that he practised it as a mortification, or as an evidence of his perfection.

§ 66. How did Jesus disappear, and afterwards reappear, when he was believed to have retired into the desert, or up a mountain, to pray?

When the spirit is clothed with a material envelope, it is

Digitized by Google

at liberty to release itself, but it always remains connected with it by a fluidic cord which is invisible to the human eye. It can emancipate itself from the body by disengaging itself during sleep; and in some very rare cases when the body is not asleep, but always when it is in a more or less ecstatic condition. It can even make itself visible and tangible at a distance, with the aid of its perisprit, and present every appearance of the human body, so as to create a complete illusion; and even in some very exceptional cases (of which you have some well-authenticated instances*) possessing all the apparent faculties of human life and speech.

The spirit undergoing material human incarnation cannot dematerialize its body, for only the decomposition caused by death can effect this.

When superior spirits are undergoing a fluidic incarnation or incorporation, they can materialize their fluidic body at will, so as to render it visible and even tangible; and they can dematerialize it, to make it vanish from your sight, by restoring it to its normal state, which is invisible to you. They can modify it to assimilate it to the regions which it traverses, but when they are subjected to incarnation or incorporation, they can only separate from their body by death, which restores them to their errant state, with their perisprit purified as far as their last incarnation or incorporation has purified it. The death of the body of superior spirits is merely the disintegration of the matter which surrounds the spirit; for the fluids which are assimilated to the perisprit to effect incarnation or incorporation, are matter to the spirit. This disintegration resembles decomposition to their acute senses. Although their bodies are composed of incorruptible substances, they see them dissolve visibly, each of the principles which compose the fluidic body separating completely, and returning to the various mediums which attract them, and whence they had been drawn.

* Several instances are quoted in *L'Union Spirite Bordelaise* (Nos. 20 and 21 for Oct. 22 and Nov. 1, 1865) where all the authorities are referred to.

Digitized by Google

Jesus availed himself of the laws which govern the fluidic bodies in the superior worlds, as well as those governing the fluids of your planet which compose your bodies (compare § 14) and thus constituted his apparently human body, which we called a tangible perisprit, to make you understand it. As Jesus was a pure spirit, and not subject to incarnation or incorporation on any planet whatever, he formed this tangible perisprit by his own will, and was perfectly able to lay it aside. The substances composing this body were naturally ethereal to human eyes, and disappeared by separating; and they recombined themselves at the will of the Master.

Pure spirits alone possess the full knowledge of the nature of the fluids employed in the formation of this tangible perisprit, and their various modes of action according to the laws and effects of magnetic attraction. Your limited intelligence prevents you from comprehending the extent of the spiritual power of Jesus, which enabled him to render this body invisible to men by separating its constituent principles and holding them by his will-power always ready to reunite as easily as to separate. You must remember that the perisprit which served as the visible and tangible body of Jesus during his residence on your planet, was only a sort of dress which he assumed to visit you, and which he abandoned whenever he was absent from human sight, when his spirit returned to the superior regions. Jesus thus withdrew from men whenever his presence was unneceesary, or ceased to be necessary. At such times the particles which constituted his tangible perisprit vanished, and re-appeared at his desire in the manner which we have explained.

The organic life of this body was not maintained when Jesus was absent from it. The nature of this body, as well as its organic life, and the means by which Jesus rendered it invisible, laid it aside, or resumed it at pleasure, and finally quitted it permanently at the time of the "ascension," depend on laws which you cannot yet understand. It would be impossible to explain them now, because you are ignorant of the nature of the fluids and their combinations, effects,

Digitized by Google

and active properties, under the influence of magnetic attraction, and the agency of the pure spirits.

When Jesus disappeared from the eyes of men, he allowed his apparent human body to mingle with the mass of fluids, while it retained its constituent principles intact. Jesus held them together by the power of his will, and by an attractive magnetic influence. It is wholly impossible for you to understand this, for the powers of the pure spirits, and even of the superior spirits, much more the power of Jesus, are beyond your comprehension. It is only by studying and practising human magnetism that you will be enabled to comprehend spiritual magnetism, and its active influence throughout all nature. When Jesus had once constructed his perisprit, its elements remained in a state of mutual attraction, which caused them to reunite whenever the will which governed the whole acted on them for the purpose.

The disintegration of the temporary perisprit of Jesus (temporary, because he only used it during the period of his earthly mission) did not prevent a connecting link existing between its particles.

We would like to explain this more clearly, but your language furnishes no appropriate words; and we are also prevented from giving you a direct explanation by your ignorance of the nature and properties of the fluids, and their mode of action and functions in the formation and life of the superior spirits, and in that of the body of Jesus; you are also ignorant of the laws which govern these phenomena. Nevertheless, if you look at a cloud when the wind blows, you will see it break up, rise into higher regions, and disappear from your sight; but it has a tendency to reunite, and if the breeze becomes favourable, it will form anew, and reappear as a compact cloud. Although any comparison is inadequate, this is very similar to the effect produced when Jesus withdrew his spirit from the perispritic body which made him visible to your eyes. When he returned to men, the scattered particles reunited, when they were retained by his presence, and the whole represented a body similar to yours in appearance, though not of the same nature.

Digitized by Google

The chemist will show you the effects of synthesis and analysis. He will show you many instances of the composition and decomposition of heterogeneous bodies forming a united whole during their union, and assuming an appearance differing from that of the constituent parts. He can analyze this product into its various parts, or combine them afresh by the methods of his art. Reflect on what the will of man can already accomplish by magnetism, although your knowledge is still so deficient and your experiments still so rudimentary. Think of the magnetic effects which man can obtain by the action of his will through the attractive influence of the fluids. Then consider how powerful must have been the will of Jesus upon this body which he had constructed, when he was thoroughly acquainted with the nature and properties of all the superior and inferior fluids, and with all the effects of spiritual magnetism. Many will call in question, and criticize our statements, and when the time has come to reply to them, we will further enlarge upon the idea underlying our words. Each day's labour is sufficient for the day.

It was not till the "ascension" of Jesus and the completion of his earthly mission that the constituent particles of the perisprit, which had served him as a robe among men, were completely dissipated, and returned to the medium which attracted them. The fluids which had been borrowed from the higher spheres returned thither, and those which belonged to your atmosphere again diffused themselves into it.

§ 67. You say, "How can it be supposed that Jesus could live in a desert for forty days and nights, without taking any food, if he was subject to the infirmities and necessities of human existence?" Will not those who do not accept the New Revelation quote the case of Moses, who remained for forty days and nights on a mountain, without eating and drinking? And is it not said that Jesus might also have endured a fast of forty days and nights in the same way, if his nature had been similar?

We adhere to our statement. You are told (Exodus xxxiv. 28) that Moses remained forty days and nights on the mountain, during which he neither ate bread nor drank water. That is, Moses ate no prepared food, but he fed on

Digitized by Google

wild plants and certain insects, with which the Hebrews occasionally sustained life. You must not forget the sobriety and the small need of food felt by Orientals, and the inhabitants of warm climates generally. Was not the mission of Moses ended before he reached the promised land? Have any of the spiritual missionaries (Moses, Elijah, John, and others) ever fulfilled a mission like that of Christ, the Lord's Anointed? Are you told the same of Jesus as of Moses? No; you are told (Matth. iv. 2; Luke iv. 2) that Jesus ate *nothing;* that he fasted for forty days and nights—that is, that he lived the whole time without taking any food whatever, prepared or not, but abstaining altogether, which is the meaning of fasting among the Hebrews. Consequently, the comparison of texts cannot be sustained; and we can only say again, How is it possible that if Jesus had been subject to human infirmities he could have lived in the desert for forty days and nights without taking food—fasting, without taking any food whatever, and not feeding on wild herbs and insects like Moses?

We must now explain why this special kind of incarnation was necessary in the case of Jesus. You acknowledge that he was a purer and more perfect spirit than any on your planet; that he has been its conductor from before the time that it emerged from chaos, or from the mass of fluids enclosing its germs. Consequently, he must be supreme over all. And can you suppose that such an ethereal spirit could endure the contact of such gross matter as the human body, as you understand it? Ah, that would be a miracle indeed, for it would reverse the order of nature, which has been established from all eternity.

You are obliged to adapt your vessels to ethereal essences that you wish to enclose, without risk of their breaking, or the spirit evaporating, and returning to the fluids from whence you have drawn it; and yet you are unwilling to admit that so ethereal a spirit as the Christ was obliged to enclose himself in an appropriate envelope! You will at least acknowledge that it is very presumptuous of those who persist in regarding Jesus as a separate though indi-

Digitized by Google

visible portion of God, to enclose this very God, the Spirit of spirits, an essence of incalculable tenuity, in so gross an earthly casket as your body! Reflect, and ask your conscience whether you can possibly admit this.

The immaterial or purified spirit can only assume a covering which harmonizes with its tenuity. It may assimilate a covering much inferior to its essence, but it cannot resume primitive matter when it has reached the culminating point of purification. As the fluidic link which unites spirit to matter is of a completely ethereal essence, it cannot adhere to the corporeal human matter of your planet; whereas it may have some affinity for a fluidic body which is immaterial to you, but which is still gross compared with the purity and tenuity of certain spirits. The tenuity of the perisprit of the pure spirit renders its attractive nature different to that of spirits who are materially incarnated; and this renders its adhesion to corporeal human matter impossible.

When Jesus assumed a body similar to that of certain elevated worlds, he assumed a covering which was material to human eyes. A miracle, in the sense hitherto attached to the term, consists in the accomplishment of an event contrary to the established laws of nature. It would be a miracle to see a human being become a lion, an elephant, or a whale. The literal fulfilment of the prophecies which represent the stars as falling from heaven would be a most startling miracle, because such events are contrary to the established order of nature; but there is nothing miraculous in events which you do not understand, but which may appear miraculous to you because you are ignorant of their causes.

In the course of time, purification, and progress, your researches will demonstrate that what is now rejected as impossible, is in accordance with natural law. This is especially true of incarnations in superior worlds, and the special character of the incarnation of Jesus, which will then be seen to be as natural as the motions of the stars, or the changes of the seasons, the tides, and everything that takes

Digitized by Google

place daily before your eyes; or even the generation of the plants and animals, which appears so natural to you, although you cannot yet fully explain it.

Let those who reject this revelation respecting the life and origin of Jesus, reflect upon his whole life, and on the various events recorded in the Gospels, which confirm it when explained in spirit and in truth; let them learn the rudiments of spiritual science, and they will understand and acknowledge it.

This time will come to all; and we say to all, Whatever may be your opinion respecting the nature and origin of Christ—whether you believe him to be material or fluidic, a man-God or the Messiah—admire his figure shining above you. Admire his love and devotion; use all your efforts to imitate him, and you will be certain to attain to light and truth before long.

MATTHEW IV.—VERSES 12–17. MARK I.—VERSES 14, 15. LUKE IV.—VERSES 14, 15.

News of the Imprisonment of John—Retirement of Jesus into Galilee—Prophecies—Residence at Capernaum.

Matth. iv. (12) Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he retired into Galilee. (13) And leaving Nazareth, he came and settled in Capernaum-on-Sea, on the borders of Zabulon and Naphthali. (14) That the word might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the Prophet, saying, (15) The land of Zabulon, and the land of Naphthali; by the way of the sea beyond Jordan; Galilee of the Gentiles; (16) The people sitting in darkness saw great light, and light has risen upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death. (17) From that time Jesus began to teach publicly, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand.

Mark i. (14) And after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. (15) And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the good news.

Luke v. (14) And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and the fame of him went out into all the surrounding country. (15) And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

§ 68. You require no explanation here. Jesus brought light wherever it was most needed, and his lessons were intended for all ears.

Digitized by Google

LUKE, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 16–21.

Jesus visits Nazareth, and reads from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

(16) And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, according to his custom, and stood up to read. (17) And the book of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and when he had unrolled the book, he found the place where it was written. (18) The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them who are bruised, (19) To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (20) And he folded up the book, and gave it to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon him. (21) And he began to say to them, This writing is fulfilled to-day in your ears.

§ 69. When Jesus had reached this point in his apparent human life, he took this opportunity of proclaiming that he was the anointed messenger of the Lord, who had descended upon earth to accomplish a mission of love, charity, devotion, and redemption, which should prepare for human regeneration through the preaching of his Gospel, and should lay its foundations securely.

LUKE, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 22–30.

Jesus reproaches the Nazarenes—Anger of those in the Synagogue—They take him to the brow of the hill to cast him down, and he disappears from them.

(22) And all bore witness to him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, and said, Is not this the son of Joseph? (23) And he said to them, You will surely repeat unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself; whatever we have heard to have been done in Capernaum, do also here in thy own country. (24) And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. (25) And I tell you of a truth there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, when there was a great famine in the whole country, (26) And Elijah was sent to none of them, except to a widow woman in Sarepta of Sidon. (27) And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them were cleansed, except Naaman the Syrian. (28) And all in the synagogue were filled with wrath when they heard these things, (29) And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down the precipice. (30) And he, passing through the midst of them, went his way.

Digitized by Google

§ 70. You need not be surprised at the Nazarenes asking, "Is he not the son of Joseph?" You are aware that all men regarded Jesus as the son of Mary and Joseph; and that it was only after the close of his earthly mission that Mary divulged the revelations of the angel, and the disciples began to regard Jesus as the son of the Virgin Mary, and of God himself, and thought that he was speaking literally when he spoke of God as his father.

When Jesus read in the book of the prophet Isaiah, and added, "Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country," he gave a lesson to those who were too proud to believe in the Lord's anointed, when he thus proclaimed himself his messenger. His teaching was intended to bear fruit both in the present and in the future, as was the case with all his lessons to men. His words (verses 25–27) were designed to teach the Jews that God looks not on the nation, but on the virtue of any person, and that they were most presumptuous to believe that they were the only people to whom God showed favour, and who deserved to be thus privileged. Let none among you share the vain pride of the Jews. The Lord looks on all his children with equal love, and those alone are privileged who are the most deserving and the purest, apart from all external forms of worship and nationality.

We now call your attention to verses 29 and 30. Was it possible for a man thus to escape from the hands of infuriated enemies, bent upon his destruction, and surrounding him on every side? Would the character of Jesus have stooped to some miserable subterfuge to move the pity of those who were about to hurl him from the precipice? And yet Jesus disappeared from among them! What conclusion do you draw from the fact of his disappearance—a fact which was repeated many times in the course of his apparent human life, both before and after his "resurrection?"

You are told that when Jesus was about to be hurled down the precipice by those who had dragged him to its brink, he passed through the midst of them, and went away—that is, through the midst of the infuriated crowd who surrounded

Digitized by Google

him. Jesus released himself from the hands of those who held him, by dissolving the tangibility of his apparently human perispritic body, and thus disappeared from their sight; at the same moment, those who held him, as well as those who crowded round, were seized with a dizziness caused by spiritual magnetism. Those who held him let him go without knowing why they did so, and when they saw that he was gone, they thought that he had availed himself of the protection of some accomplice, and had hidden himself. You know the influence which the spirit world is capable of exerting on your organisms. What is the nature of the influence which stops you instantaneously in the course of a thought or action, without your being conscious of the check at the time? It is a kind of dulness which affects the brain by the action of spirit magnetism upon the fluids which envelope it.

The dizziness felt by the enemies of Jesus was caused by the influence of the superior spirits who surrounded him. The current of their thoughts was suddenly arrested, and they saw Jesus disappear without knowing at the moment that he was gone; and they only recovered the full possession of their senses when he had already vanished from their sight. There was a large crowd, and the action of the spirits only affected those who were nearest to Jesus, and saw him pass among them. Those who were further off did not see him, but believed that he had escaped in another direction. Everything took place as we have described to you, because it was then necessary for men to believe in the "humanity" of Jesus, without being able to take note of such phenomena as these.

You consider these explanations important, and justly so, for they enable you to understand the nature of the body of Jesus, which was apparently human, but really perispritic, and superior to humanity. Everything in the apparent human life of Jesus, and in the consecutive events of his earthly mission had an express design. Some events were intended for example and instruction, and others were designed to lead the men of that age to believe in his

Digitized by Google

humanity; and at the same time to supply future ages with evidence of the purely perispritic, though tangible, nature of his body. This was only to be explained by the light of the New Revelation, which we now bring you at the commencement of the new era of the Christianity of Christ. It will enable you to explain, understand, and believe facts that would otherwise be unintelligible, absurd, impossible, and absolutely inadmissible, if Jesus had undergone human incarnation as you undergo it, and had had a body like yours.

You must not confound the influence which we have just described as exerted by superior spirits on the men of Nazareth, with the influence which spirits can sometimes exert on men, when they cause them to lose sight of what passes, and give them the representation of something else. This belongs to a class of more or less complicated phenomena, which we shall have occasion to explain at another time.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 18–22. MARK, CHAP. I. VERSES 16–20. LUKE, CHAP. V.—VERSES 1–11.

Calling of Peter, Andrew, James and John—The Miraculous Draught of Fishes.

Matth. v. (18) And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. (19) And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. (20) And they immediately left their nets, and followed him. (21) And going on from thence, he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them; (22) And they immediately left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Mark i. (16) And as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. (17) And Jesus said unto them, Follow me, and I will cause you to become fishers of men. (18) And they immediately left their nets, and followed him. (19) And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending the nets. (20) And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the servants, and followed him.

Luke v. (1) And it came to pass that as the crowds pressed upon him to hear the word of God, and he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, (2) And saw two boats standing by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were wringing out their nets. (3) And he went into one of

Digitized by Google

the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put off a little from the land; and he sat down, and taught the crowds from the boat. (4) And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, Push out into deep water, and let down your nets for a draught. (5) And Simon answered and said unto him, Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing, but I will let down the net according to thy word. (6) And when they had done this, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their net broke. (7) And they made signs to their partners who were in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. (8) When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. (9) For he and all who were with him were astonished at the draught of fishes which they had taken. (10) And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon's. And Jesus said to Simon, Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men. (11) And when they had brought the boats to land, they left all, and followed him.

§ 71. You may learn a lesson even from the submission of the first disciples of Jesus. They were inspired by their guardian angels, and they hearkened to the voice which urged them to obey. Jesus read their inmost souls, and chose them, and they followed him by a kind of attraction which links sympathetic souls together.

There was no "miracle" in the draught of fishes, in the sense that men attach to the word "miracle;" for it was not an event contrary to the laws of nature. The immutable will of God never departs from the laws of nature which he has established from all eternity. There is nothing supernatural, for everything is accomplished in physical nature through spirit-action according to natural law. The draught of fishes was intended to astonish these men, who were simple and ignorant in their incarnate state. They were seized with terror; their hearts were humble, and as they were ignorant of the cause of the phenomenon, they thought that God had manifested his power by a "miracle;" and did not attempt to penetrate further into the mystery.

Can you wonder at the amazement of the disciples when the proud and ignorant incredulity of your own days rejects the fact because it cannot understand and explain it? Do not the incredulous deny the power of spirits and magnetic phenomena, either without examination, or without sufficiently studying them from a theoretical and experimental stand-point? Do they not refuse to examine

Digitized by Google

into Spiritism, which combines revelation with science, and into spiritual science and magnetism, in which humanity might find all light, all science, and all truth, as well as all physical, moral, and intellectual progress?

We have already explained (§ 14) that magnetism is the universal agent which moves and governs all things. Everything is subjected to magnetic influence, and everything throughout the universe and in all the kingdoms of nature takes place by magnetic attraction. (Compare p. 45.) When man has become sufficiently enlightened to comprehend the full extent of this great law, the world will be subject to him, for he will be able to direct its material action. But he cannot attain this power without long and profound study of the causes of things, nor without reverence and love towards Him who has entrusted him with that great principle of action by the exercise of intelligence and experiment. If man studies and experiments with humility of heart, he will learn to avail himself of this powerful agent, magnetic attraction.

Human magnetism is the concentration of the fluids existing in man and in the atmosphere around him, by the human will, and by this means man is able to act upon men or things at a distance. Spirits are able to draw to themselves the fluids existing in man or diffused through space, by concentrating them by their will in a similar manner; and they can employ these fluids to influence men or things, and produce the various effects which they may desire. The power of the will of man, and of the magnetic results which he can obtain, are in proportion to the degree of purity to which he has attained, which occasionally procures him the aid of elevated spirits in his efforts, without his being aware of it. The will power and magnetic power of a spirit also correspond with his degree of purity, and with his moral and intellectual elevation, in proportion to the knowledge which he has acquired of causes. This also enables him to penetrate to the source of things, and to understand the various powers of magnetic attraction.

The "miraculous" draught of fishes was due to natural

Digitized by Google

causes, and was effected solely by the will of Jesus, who was thoroughly acquainted with the powers of the universal agent, magnetic attraction, and with the nature and properties of fluids. His sight was not obscured by the flesh, but easily penetrated the water. He was always a spirit, and his perispritic body left him the full and complete possession of his spiritual life. He saw the fluids surrounding various kinds of fish, and he drew them into the waters around the boat by the exertion of his powerful will, and they rushed into the open nets.

Do not ask for a further explanation of this. It would be beyond the limits of your humanity; and it is absolutely impossible for you to understand the laws and effects by which these results were produced. Man cannot yet penetrate these secrets. Do not forget that Jesus was a pure spirit among the pure, and that you cannot attempt to emulate his powers until you have acquired the requisite purity. There are still many secrets awaiting you in nature, but they will be unfolded to your gaze in proportion as your ideas are purified and enable you to ascend to the source of things.

The only spiritual application which we shall make of the draught of fishes is that at the present day Spiritism corresponds to Peter's nets. Men will be attracted by the fluids which the good spirits will diffuse around you, and will throw themselves into the nets of their own accord, that they may be rescued from the polluted waters of human vice.

We shall explain to you afterwards that Peter was selected by Christ to watch over the progress of faith, the development of intelligence, and the fulfilment of his promises. Christ declared that he should build his church (meaning your planet and its humanity) by conducting your planet in the path of physical progress to its fluidic degree, and by leading mankind to perfection through physical, moral, and intellectual progress.

§ 72. Could exalted spirits still produce similar effects by their magnetism?

Yes, with the permission of God, and aided, if needful,

Digitized by Google

by spirits higher than themselves; but we never act without a motive, or for some useful purpose. What has happened once may happen again, and often does take place without your knowledge. Many events which you attribute to chance or good luck are due to our secret influence.

§ 73. Could man attain a "miraculous" draught of fishes at the present day by means of human magnetism, and the theoretical and practical knowledge which he has already acquired, if he were aided by sufficiently exalted spirits?

No; not man as he is at present. He must first acquire a degree of purity which he is far from possessing. God never delegates his power except to those who have become worthy to wield it.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 23–25. MARK, CHAP. I. VERSES 21–28. CHAP. III.—VERSES 7–12. LUKE, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 31–37.

Preaching of Jesus—His Fame—The Physical and Moral Cures called "Miracles."

Matth iv. (23) And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and infirmity among the people. (24) And his fame went throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and demoniacs and lunatics and paralytics, and he healed them. (25) And great multitudes followed him from Galilee, and Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judæa, and from beyond Jordan.

Mark i. (21) And they went into Capernaum, and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught. (22) And they were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (23) And there was in their synagogue a man possessed by an unpurified spirit, and he cried out, (24) Saying, Alas, what is there betwixt us and thee, O Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. (25) And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be silenced, and come out of him. (26) And when the unpurified spirit had convulsed him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. (27) And they were all amazed, and debated together, saying, What is this; what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unpurified spirits, and they obey him. (28) And immediately his fame went out into all the surrounding country of Galilee.

Mark iii. (7) And Jesus went to the lake with his disciples, and a large crowd followed him from Galilee and from Judæa. (8) And from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and beyond Jordan, and the districts round Tyre and Sidon, a large crowd, hearing what great things he

Digitized by Google

performed, came to him. (9) And he asked his disciples to have a boat ready for him, because of the multitude, lest they should press upon him. (10) For he healed many, so that as many as had diseases pressed upon him that they might touch him. (11) And the unpurified spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried out, saying, Thou art the Son of God. (12) And he cautioned them many times that they should not make him known.

Luke iv. (31) And he came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. (32) And they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with power. (33) And there was a man in the synagogue who had a spirit of an unpurified devil, and cried out with a loud voice, (34) Saying, Alas, what is there betwixt us and thee, O Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. (35) And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be silent, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and did him no harm. (36) And they were all amazed, and debated with each other, saying, What is this word? for with authority and power he commandeth the unpurified spirits, and they come out. (37) And his fame went out into all parts of the surrounding country.

§ 74. What can we teach you about the apparent human life of Jesus and the events of his earthly mission, except what may be deduced from the Evangelists? Do you not perceive that Jesus constantly practised every form of charity, and attracted to himself not only the great and powerful, but the humble and unhappy? He preached repentance, and spread healing of soul and body around him. O men! if you lay his teachings to heart, we shall have no occasion to comment upon them. Follow Jesus with love, and the intelligence of love will be developed in you. In effecting material cases, Jesus employed the magnetic power given him by his perfect purity, and of which man cannot yet form an adequate idea. Nevertheless, you may imagine what the magnetic power of the will of Jesus over the regenerating fluids must have been, when you consider that he was a spirit of unparalleled purity, and that he was thoroughly acquainted with all their properties; and if you consider the influence which the magnetizer can sometimes exert over his patient by human magnetism, especially in the case of a conscious or unconscious healing medium who employs magnetic action, and is aided by good or superior spirits. Therefore, you should not be surprised at his accomplishing so many material cures during his earthly mission. He was thoroughly acquainted with the formation, conditions of life,

Digitized by Google

and functions of your bodies, and with the seat and causes of your diseases and infirmities. Nothing escaped the influence of his spiritual life, which was undimmed by the flesh which limits your spirits; and although he had assumed a perispritic envelope, to make himself visible and tangible among you, he was always a spirit, only apparently incarnated, and possessed of his full independence and liberty in its immeasurable extent and action in space.

You are told that all who were afflicted with any infirmity crowded round him to touch him (Luke, chap. vi. v. 18), because virtue went out from him which healed them all. Jesus shed around the vivifying magnetic principle which he possessed, and which he increased still more by the power of his will. Being a spirit, though apparently incarnated, he saw beforehand those who came to him and needed his power; and he then exerted his will to impress more strongly the minds of men who would have been indifferent, if not incredulous, about moral cures, but who exclaimed, "Hosanna" at the least physical relief.

In effecting moral cures, it was simply enough for him to show himself to the evil spirits. He showed them his spirit, and not his envelope, and his powerful will was alone sufficient to drive them away. At that period, as at present, all the most elevated spirits who labour at the progress of your planet and its humanity, were subject to his moral influence; and he also possessed an immediate power to compel all the inferior, impure, and evil spirits to obey his will. Praise be to the Lord, he still possesses, and ever will possess, these powers.

You must understand by such expressions as Satan, demon, devil, unpurified spirits, &c.; evil spirits. These human expressions are synonymous, and are employed by the Evangelists with the same signification. You must understand by "possessed," or "possessed by the devil," persons who were either under the bodily or under the bodily and mental control of evil spirits. Lunatics were persons who were liable to temporary obsessions, taking place at almost regular intervals.

Digitized by Google

The possession spoken of by the Evangelists was simply control. Jesus always availed himself of expressions in accordance with the prejudices and traditions of those around him, in order that they might understand and listen to him.

Subjugation is the dominating influence of an evil spirit who has overcome and temporarily subjected to his will a weaker spirit who has permitted him to take possession of it. Whether subjugation is bodily only, or bodily and mental, the obsessing spirit does not inhabit the man whom he has subjected, but influences him by remaining constantly at his side. In order to produce corporeal or physical effects, he acts fluidically on his victim, by combining the fluids of his own perisprit with those of the perisprit of the latter, and avails himself of every medianimic susceptibility, whether sensitive or impressionable or physical, which the organism of his victim places at his disposal. He causes him to feel his presence; he torments him at his pleasure, or throws him into convulsions; in short, he makes use of his body according to his caprice, by means of fluidic action and the dominant power of his will, and produces various physical effects.

In producing combined physical and mental effects, the spirit acts as we have just described, and makes use of the various medianimic faculties of his subject, whether hearing, speaking, seeing, or psychographic, by acting on the material organs suited to the desired manifestation. He makes him hear his voice; makes him speak, or write, or see visions; in short, he causes him bodily and mental torment in every way that his victim's organization allows. Or else he leads him into absurd or mischievous resolves, and the most ridiculous actions; or he goes so far as to exert fluidic action on the brain; and uses his powerful will to produce effects which men unacquainted with spiritual phenomena regard as an ordinary case of madness attended by lucid intervals.

All the physical and mental phenomena related by the Evangelists of persons said to be possessed by the devil, were produced in the way that we have just described.

Independently of obsession and of bodily, or bodily and

Digitized by Google

mental subjugation combined, there is a case which you may call "possession," in which the obsessor displaces the incarnate spirit, and uses his body as his own. This substitution is effected by the dominant will of the evil spirit, who expels the incarnate spirit from his own body, to which he nevertheless remains bound, as it is connected with its perisprit by a fluidic cord. The evil spirit introduces himself into the body by combining the fluids of his own perisprit with those of the perisprit of his victim. That of the latter is the indispensable instrument and agent, but is completely dominated by the other.

During this temporary substitution, the spirit of the victim is removed from his body, but is bound to it by the fluidic cord, and sees it act under the domination of the evil spirit who has temporarily subjugated it to his will, without having the power to prevent it. This substitution may take place when the victim is awake, as well as in the somnambulic state; and in the former case it is often attributed to mental derangement; but cases of this kind are very uncommon.

There is another exceptional case of substitution, which takes place for some useful purpose, and with the permission of the guardian angels, as a voluntary act. This happens when the incarnate spirit is in a state of magnetic somnambulism, and consents to withdraw from his body at the request of a spirit, and thus lends him the instrument which he requires for some manifestation. In this case the mode of substitution is the same as in the last, and is effected in a similar manner, but with the difference that both spirits consent to and desire its accomplishment.

Obsessions and subjugations are due to the attractive influence of similar fluids, and result from the disposition of the incarnate spirit, and the nature of his evil tendencies and desires. They are sometimes a trial, and often an expiation connected with the events of a previous existence. Although they are an evil to the incarnate spirit, they are nevertheless permitted for his benefit; for be well assured that everything, even punishment, is intended to conduce to your moral improvement and progress. Nothing can take

Digitized by Google

place without the will of God, nor without the supervision of superior and good spirits.

You meet with obsessed and subjugated persons among you daily, whom men who are ignorant of spiritual truths consider to be afflicted with physical diseases or infirmities, or with ordinary madness. They try in vain to heal them by human methods, instead of resorting to prayer and moral example.

Do you, who have not yet attained to that perfect purity which only pure spirits possess, and which would give you an immediate power over evil spirits, repulse them on the instant by prayer and moral example. Act towards the incarnate spirit in such a manner as to enlighten and soothe him, and thus predispose him to attract good spirits to himself, whose fluids and assistance may drive away the obsessing spirits. Act thus with a collected mind, and with charity for your wandering brethren, that you may win them back by persevering prayer of the heart and not of the lips; exhort them fervently with the firm and gentle benevolence and charity, founded on prayer, which finally moves the most hardened and rebellious. O Spiritists! rely on the good and superior spirits around you, and call them to your aid. They will hasten at your friendly voice, and unite their efforts with yours. Take confidence, for they always listen to the prayer of a pure heart and good conscience, when they are called to aid in a work of love and charity.

There are always "demons" among you. You know that Spiritism is both a revelation and a science, and will disperse all clouds and enlighten all darkness. It will enable you to distinguish those who are obsessed or subjugated, and are only apparently ill, infirm, or mad, from those who are actually so. The former require moral treatment, but human methods of physical cure are applicable to the latter. You can distinguish between doubtful cases when you are moved solely by humanity, disinterestedness, love and charity, by means of psychography, or, better still, by seeing or hearing mediumship. These methods would reveal the presence and action of the obsessing spirit.

Digitized by Google

You are told that there was a man in the synagogue who was "possessed by an impure spirit." He was subjugated bodily and mentally in the manner which we have explained; and the spirit acted fluidically on his vocal organs and rendered him a speaking medium. He thus exclaimed—"Alas, what is there betwixt us and thee, O Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Then Jesus commanded the obsessing spirit to cease the subjugation, using terms appropriate to the intelligence and ideas of the bystanders, saying—"Hold thy peace, and come out of the man." This man suffered from the fluidic action of the perisprit, and the will of the obsessing spirit on his own, by which he controlled him at pleasure, and was seized with violent convulsions. He fell down in the midst, and uttered a great cry when the obsessing spirit departed.

When the spirit asked, "Art thou come to destroy us?" he alluded to the knowledge of the causes and effects of subjugation, which Jesus could have taught to men if he had wished, and which would have kept them on their guard. But the time had not yet come to teach men the secrets of the other world. They would long remain unable to receive the knowledge of the relations of the invisible with the visible world; and Jesus consequently answered—"Be silent, and come out of the man."

You are told that when the unpurified spirits saw Jesus, they fell down before him, exclaiming, "Thou art the Son of God." These were persons whom the evil spirits had subjugated bodily and mentally, and who mingled with the crowd, or crossed the path of Jesus. But the spirits were themselves exposed to the sight of the Lord, and their victims fell down under their influence and became speaking mediums, who uttered words of truth for the instruction and enlightenment of future ages.

When the spirits caused their victims to fall down before Jesus, and to speak such words as "Thou art the Holy One of God," "Thou art the Son of God," they were impelled by the superior spirits who surrounded the Master, for in

Digitized by Google

thus speaking they proved to men the identity of the Christ. They did not behold Jesus as a man, but as a pre-eminently pure spirit, and he consequently forbade them to make it known, for the time was not yet come for man to know what was beyond humanity.

Such expressions as "the Holy One of God," "the Son of God," "the Lord," are terms of reverence implying the superiority of Jesus over all spirits, even the most elevated of those who labour at the progress of your planet and its humanity. The New Revelation has taught you the exact import of these expressions by teaching you the spiritual origin of Jesus, and his mission as regards your planet and its humanity.

It was necessary for Jesus to impress the masses strongly by means of material facts addressed to the gross senses of man, and by displaying his power over nature, over "hell," and over the "devils," who prostrated themselves before him, and proclaimed him to be the son of God. As men were then ignorant of the causes and effects of these phenomena, and were unable to understand them, they regarded them as "miracles."

This was necessary to cause his mission to be accepted at that ignorant period, and to insure its success and future results. Are we not still obliged to proportion our instructions to the degree of intelligence and moral development of those to whom we speak? After the completion of the mission of Jesus, his Apostles continued to act, like him, to confirm its truth. Their incarnate condition was no impediment to them, for they were aided by pure and superior spirits, and being upheld by the will of their Master, they acted as if they had been in a spiritual state themselves. Aided thus by the will of Jesus, and the secret aid of good spirits, they effected material and moral cures, as Jesus had done, and by the same means. They healed the sick and infirm by the magnetic power which was communicated to them, and they employed the immediate power which was given them over all errant and incarnate spirits, to drive away the evil spirits who obsessed or subjugated men. They

Digitized by Google

also "raised the dead" by recalling the spirits to inert bodies, which presented all the appearance of death on account of the partial disengagement of spirits, which were nevertheless connected with their bodies by a fluidic link. Similar cases of physical and mental cures have often occurred from the time of Jesus and the Apostles till your own day, when the new and blessed era of Spiritism has commenced. Those which took place in public were believed to be miraculous, but others have been effected secretly; and men have neither understood the facts themselves nor their cause. Each period changes according to the minds of the men who live in it. In the present condition of physics, you have material "miracles," which sceptics do not believe, and attribute to sleight of hand or collusion.

When the intelligence of men has reached a certain point, they require moral "miracles." These are cases of the soul, and not of the body. It is needful to cure what suffers most; and is it not your soul? Has not the most diseased and most precious portion of your being most need of a cure?

After the New Revelation which you have received of the relations of the invisible to the visible world, and the means by which Jesus and his Apostles accomplished works which the ignorant regarded as "miraculous," you will look upon such phenomena as simply the result of the purity and elevation of the incarnate spirit. Or else you will regard them as due to the secret aid of pure and superior spirits, and of the will of the Master, whose magnetic power will be medianimically communicated in an occult manner to effect material cures of human diseases and infirmities. Immediate power will be given in the same manner to drive away evil spirits instantaneously, and to recall life to inert bodies.

When the time has come, incarnate spirits will be able to cure diseases and infirmities, to drive away evil spirits, and to restore life to inert bodies like the Apostles; but observe that these cures were only called "miracles" because their cause was unknown. They will appear to you to be only the natural consequence of moral purity, and you will regard

Digitized by Google

such actions as only a proof that he who accomplishes them is either more elevated than others, or more protected, because more worthy of protection.

Material and moral cures are often effected among you even at the present day, but they pass unnoticed simply because they are related by Spiritists. They are often received with indifference and incredulity by those who do not understand them, and even by those who profit by them; whereas those which were effected during the earthly mission of Jesus were repeated and exaggerated, and appealed much more strongly at an ignorant period to the gross senses of men. The Pharisees of your own days deny and reject the revelation which the spirits of the Lord bring to men by his order and in the name of his Christ, pretending that it is a work of the devil; just as the Pharisees formerly denied and rejected the revelation offered them by Christ himself. They accused him of driving away demons by the prince of the demons, and asked for "miracles." Refer such objectors to atheists beating their breasts at the feet of their offended God, and earnestly praying for the continued existence which they had denied. Tell them that moral miracles will come in due time, which will purify all humanity, and cause the pure gold to issue from the furnace into which it will be cast.

Editor's note to the preceding chapter.

I have witnessed one of these rare and exceptional cases of substitution, by the voluntary act of an incarnate spirit who desired to aid a suffering spirit to manifest himself, and thus to ameliorate his condition. This took place under the following circumstances:—

In the month of March, 1863, I went to visit Mme. T., a very lucid somnambulist, during one of the consultations which she was in the habit of giving to patients. I was accompanied by M. Puginier, a lieutenant in the 88th regiment of the line, and by M. Du Boscq, a member of the General Council of the Department of the Gironde. Just as we were on the point of leaving we were recalled by a sudden exclamation. Mme. T., still in the somnambulic state, stood up, and addressed me as follows: "It is I, G. D., who wish to speak to you, and have availed myself of the present opportunity of conversing with you. I have entered this body, and now make use of it for the purpose. I suffer terribly, and am very unhappy," &c. (I had known G. D. intimately during his earthly life, but he had been dead for some months.)

He spoke freely to me, and described his terrible moral sufferings;

Digitized by Google

and, what was much worse, he told me that he saw no end to them, and despaired of any relief. He took my hand, with that of Mme. T., as if it had been his own; and I had a long conversation with this unhappy spirit, which lasted more than half-an-hour. I instructed and consoled him, and advised him to be patient and resigned, and exhorted him to a sincere and profound repentance for the faults which he had committed during his earthly life, and endeavoured to awaken the desire to repair them. I pointed out to him the greatness, justice, goodness, and infinite mercy of God, who is always ready to pardon the guilty and wandering spirit, when he has grown humble, penitent, and sincere, by opening to him the way to new experiences by reincarnation, which is also the path of reparation and progress. I thus endeavoured to enlighten this crushed soul with a ray of hope and faith.

While this substitution lasted, the spirit of G. D. made use of the body of Mme. T. as if it had been his own, and employed its material organs to speak and act, reproducing the tones and gestures of his earthly life.

After the suffering spirit had departed, and the spirit of Mme. T. had again resumed possession of her body, she said, still in the somnambulic state, "This poor creature is in great suffering, and very unhappy. He was anxious to speak to you, and I consented, with the permission of my guardian angels, to lend him my body, so that he could enter it and use it for the purpose. I stood by, connected with my body by a luminous fluidic cord, but invisible to human eyes."

This substitution was repeated several times at the house of Madame T., and in the presence of M. Du Boscq, who was also the friend of G. D. From the time of the first interview I asked the spirit of G. D. to come to my house every evening, when suffering spirits, wandering in space, came to manifest themselves through a writing medium, and to ask and receive prayer. Ever since the spirit of G. D. has manifested himself of his own accord. I have prayed for him for a long time, and continue to do so still. My efforts, advice, exhortations, and prayers have been rewarded, and I have the joy of having contributed to the relief of this suffering spirit, and to his consolation, enlightenment, and improvement, by developing in him more and more patience and resignation in his moral sufferings, and by awakening the desire of reparation and progress.

I have also witnessed a case in which the presence and action of an obsessing spirit was revealed by medianimic somnambulism. The patient was a man who appeared to suffer from a nervous disease, which the doctors had in vain attempted to cure by the methods employed for material cures. All doubt was removed by the aid of medianimic somnambulism, which enabled us to perceive that it was a case of obsession, and that it was needful to employ moral treatment for a moral case. The circumstances were as follows:—

I went one day in December, 1863, to witness one of Mme. D.'s consultations, and this man came to consult her, and he described how he had been suffering for several months from what the doctors considered to be a nervous affection. He experienced contractions and spasms in the throat, face, and neck, at intervals; and when he sat down to table, his teeth and jaws were sometimes fixed in such a manner that it was impossible for him to eat, and he had to give up the attempt, although he was very hungry. He had consulted several doctors, and had tried many remedies without any result. He was greatly troubled, and very anxious about his condition.

Digitized by Google

He had scarcely finished speaking when a slight spasm appeared in his face, and the somnambulist said, as if addressing a third party, "Let this man alone." She then exhorted this invisible being not to torment the man, and said, "I am going to pray for you;" and then prayed. Next she turned to the patient, and when she had examined him, she said, "You are not ill, but you are tormented by an evil spirit, and you must pray for him. You will never get rid of him except by prayer. Go and pray, not with the lips, but with the heart, with charity and unselfishness. Come back in a week's time, and let us know the result.

I then went up to Mme. T. (who was already in the somnambulic state when I arrived), and put myself *en rapport* with her by taking her hand. "Ah, you are there!" she said to me. "This man is subjugated by an obsessing spirit. He is not ill at all; and this affection will disappear when the spirit has left him."

"Well," replied I, "we must undertake this moral cure, for instead of one spirit, there are two." I then addressed the obsessing spirit, and said, "Come to me at 7 o'clock this evening, at the time when unhappy or suffering spirits request my prayers through a writing medium, and receive them. If you will not come of your own accord, I will evoke you; I will pray with you, and show you that you are acting wickedly, and that you ought to feel love and charity towards all your incarnate and errant brethren after death, as well as on earth."

On that evening, and on every succeeding evening for a week, I evoked the obsessing spirit, and prayed for, exhorted and advised him. The patient returned to Mme. T. at the end of the week, and I met him there. When he was *en rapport* with the medium, he said that he had suffered rather less, but that he was not yet cured. Mme. T. still saw the obsessing spirit by the side of the patient when she was in the somnambulic state, and prayed with and exhorted him.

These interviews were repeated every week at Mme. T.'s house. The patient continued his prayers, and I also continued my evocations and prayers for about a month. At the end of this period, the obsessing spirit, led by his guardian angel, manifested of his own accord at my house. He had repented and turned towards the light. He had become a suffering spirit, had given up tormenting the patient, and asked to be prayed for. Three days afterwards I met the patient at Mme. T.'s house at the usual time. He was restored to health, and said, "I have had no return of my complaint for the last five days; I am quite cured." The patient was delivered from his subjugation, but I had still a duty to perform towards the spirit who had subjugated him, and who had now become a suffering spirit. From the time that he first manifested himself spontaneously, he continued to visit me to receive my prayers every evening of his own accord. I have the joy of having contributed to his relief and moral improvement by developing in him more and more patience and resignation in his sufferings, repentance, and the desire of reparation and progression.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 1-12. LUKE, CHAP. VI. VERSES 20-26.

Sermon on the Mount.

Matth. v. (1) And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain, and when he had seated himself, his disciples came to him.

Digitized by Google

(2) And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, (3) Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. (4) Blessed are the mourners, for they shall be comforted. (5) Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (6) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. (7) Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. (8) Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (9) Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. (10) Blessed are those who are persecuted on account of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. (11) Blessed are ye, when they shall reproach you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, on account of me. (12) Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in the heavens, for thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Luke vi. (20) And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. (21) Blessed are ye who hunger now, for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh. (22) Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall mark you out and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man. (23) Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven, for their fathers did according to these things to the prophets. (24) But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your encouragement. (25) Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. (26) Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for their fathers did according to these things to the false prophets.

§ 75. These lessons teach humility and gentleness, as well as kindness and benevolence. They teach resignation under those physical and mental sufferings which must always be regarded as a just expiation, because they either arise from the faults or imprudence of man, which greatly aggravate his earthly trials, or else from those of his previous existences, which are all connected together; for every one of you suffers the secret penalties entailed upon him by previous incarnations. Christ also enjoins upon you the ardent, earnest and constant love of duty and tolerance at all times and under all circumstances, consideration for the faults and weaknesses of others, and active and devoted sympathy for the physical and mental sufferings of your brethren. He likewise teaches you to pardon insults and offences, and to forget them so sincerely that the past is dead both to the thought and heart; and to feel love and charity towards all. He teaches you purity of heart, which does not consist exclusively in abstaining from all evil words and actions, but even from all evil thoughts. True purity of heart

Digitized by Google

can only exist in abstaining from everything evil, and in the active and devoted practice of everything good, according to physical, moral and intellectual order. It includes moderation, mildness, patience, obedience, resignation, firmness and perseverance in faith, and in the practice of justice, whatever may be the insults or physical and moral persecutions which you may have to endure from men. It also includes disinterestedness and the renunciation of material objects as the means and end of pride or selfishness, and of the material appetites, passions and vices which degrade humanity. It includes the desire of celestial happiness, and gratitude towards the Creator, who has reserved a great reward for those who have acquired these virtues and fulfilled these duties. All this is contained in the words quoted at the head of this section. Study them, and, what is of more importance, practise them. Do not rest your hopes on earthly happiness, nor put your trust in your riches or intelligence, but only in your God, from whom you receive everything.

Let the rich man act as though he were poor; let him share with his brethren, and bear himself meekly. Let the wise man act like the little child who waits for its mother's guidance; but let him share with his brethren by giving them wise and gentle advice, always based on his own example. Let him who has enough think of him who is hungry, and let him share with them the material bread which feeds the body, and the bread of life, the spiritual bread which feeds the soul. Let him who is joyful act as though he were in sorrow, and let him share with his weeping brother, by endeavouring to console him, and by sympathizing with him in his sorrows. You may sum up these lessons as the practice of work, love and charity, according to physical, material, moral and intellectual order.

Have men understood the real meaning of these words of Jesus, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens?" The poor in spirit are those who trust in the Lord, and not in themselves. They know that they owe everything to their Creator, and that conse-

Digitized by Google

quently they possess nothing of their own. Their spirit is free from pride, and resembles the poor man who is destitute of worldly wealth. He can act more freely, for he does not fear the thieves who creep into the rich man's house at night; and he stands naked before the Lord. That is, he ascribes nothing to himself, but acknowledges that he owes everything to the goodness of his Heavenly Father, and his humility smoothes his path by removing the obstacles which pride would raise up all around him.

Be, therefore, O beloved ones! simple-hearted and humble-minded, for humility is the source of all virtue and progress. It smoothes the path of man towards the light and the realms of happiness; whereas pride leads to darkness and expiation, and to exile on the inferior worlds.

(Matth. v. 11; Luke vi. 22.)—These words, like most of those which the Master addressed to his disciples, applied as much to the future as to the present. They are addressed to all who are called upon to endure any kind of persecution, whether physical or moral, on account of their faith in God. They apply to all those who are persecuted for their belief and suffer for their faith, but overcome their trials, however severe they may be. Men will be persecuted for the truth as long as your world remains unpurified; and those who triumph over these persecutions may well be called happy, for defection is easy, especially at the present day; and those who persevere to the end will receive a great reward.

Arm yourselves with all your energies, Spiritists. The most dangerous weapon, and that most dreaded by man, is ridicule; and it is this which you have to encounter to-day. It inflicts painful wounds; but keep on your guard, and arm yourselves beforehand with the healing balm of faith. Let your faith sustain you. It will make you deaf to sarcasm, and lead you to think lightly of the unfair treatment to which you will be exposed. Faith is your shield; shelter yourselves behind it, and advance boldly, for all the darts hurled by envy and calumny will recoil upon themselves. Let your conduct be always both dignified and

Digitized by Google

charitable, in your words and teachings. Practise what you preach, and we will uphold you.

You should also understand what Jesus meant by saying, "But woe unto you who are rich, for you have received your encouragement." This malediction of the just and gentle Pastor only applies to those who sacrifice everything for the good things of the world, stake all their enjoyments and hopes upon material objects, reject the truths which are offered them, repulse their guides, protectors and brethren, and put their confidence in the evil spirits who control them. Jesus said, "Woe to them," for they will have to suffer, to redeem their past offences, and their remorse will be bitter in proportion to their having wilfully hardened themselves.

Jesus also said, "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep." Yes, those who laugh at the truth will one day lament over their derision. Everything must come in due time, but let them laugh at you now. A day will come when they will repent, and will ask to return among you, as apostles of the true spiritual faith, and then they will laugh no more. Do not be offended at their ridicule, but rather weep for those who laugh at you, for they will bitterly repent it.

Jesus also said, "Woe to you when all men shall speak well of you, for thus did their fathers to the false prophets."

When Jesus spoke thus to his disciples, there were and had been false prophets in the world. They exist now, for your world still remains in a state of moral inferiority. They are men who try to draw the simple and confiding over to their own ideas, under the influence of pride, selfishness, material interests, cupidity, intolerance, ambition, or fanaticism, or some other evil motive. They are men who know the truth, but conceal it from the eyes of the people to keep them obedient and submissive; men who understand the truth in their inmost soul, but refuse to acknowledge it from pride, and teach error knowingly, fearing lest it should be said, "Woe to them!"

Woe to you, whoever you are, when the men who hearken to the voice of these false prophets, and speak well of them

Digitized by Google

and walk in their steps, shall speak well of you; for you will be attracted by their praises, and liable to be led astray, and enticed into the paths of error and voluntary lying, hypocrisy, and moral perversion.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 13–16. MARK, CHAP. IX.—VERSE 49; IV.—VERSES 21–23. LUKE, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 34, 35; VIII.—VERSES 16, 17; and XI.—VERSES 33–36.

Salt and Light of the World—Candle under a Bushel—Nothing Hidden which shall not be Revealed, nor Secret which shall not be Known.

Matth. v. (13) Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt become tasteless, with what shall it be salted? It is then worthless, except to be cast out, and to be trodden down by men. (14) Ye are the light of the world; a city built on a hill cannot be concealed. (15) Neither do they light a candle and put it under the measure, but on a candlestick, and it gives light for the whole family. (16) Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and may glorify your Father in the heavens.

Mark ix. (49) Salt is good, but if the salt has become unsalted, with what will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and live in peace with one another.

Mark iv. (21) And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under the measure, or under the bed, and not to be put on the candlestick? (22) For there is nothing hid which shall not be made manifest, nor anything secret which shall not come to light. (23) If any one has ears to hear, let him hear.

Luke xiv. (34) Salt is good, but if the salt has become tasteless, with what shall it be salted? (35) It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill: they cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Luke viii. (16) And no one when he has lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a candlestick, that those who enter may see the light. (17) For there is nothing hidden which shall not be brought to light, nor secret which shall not be known, and come to light.

Luke xi. (33) And no one having lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, nor under the measure, but on the candlestick, that those who enter may see the light. (34) The light of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is single, your whole body is also full of light, but whenever thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. (35) Look therefore, lest the light that is in thee should be darkness. (36) If therefore thy whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the candle gives thee light with its brightness.

§ 76. Spiritists should understand these metaphors. Salt

Digitized by Google

here represents the principles of a man's own character, which he ought to diffuse around him. It includes morality, love to God and submission to the divine laws; and thus the *savour* of man consists in his observance of all the laws of God and Christ. If he is led astray by evil tendencies, he loses sight of the end which he should attain, and the means of reaching it; he loses his savour, and is cast out. That is, the guilty spirit who has failed in his earthly experiences is first subjected in the errant state to appropriate moral sufferings or tortures corresponding to the faults which he has committed, and then to reincarnation, either on your earth or on the inferior planets, according to his degree of guilt, where he is forced by new trials to redeem the past, expiate his offences, and advance.

He will be cast out; "he that has ears to hear, let him hear." This will take place when the regeneration is about to be accomplished, and your planet will no longer be inhabited except by good spirits. The spirit who still remains guilty and rebellious, will then be removed from your earth, and cast down to lower worlds, where he will have to expiate for long ages his obstinacy in evil, and his voluntary blindness. Need we explain to Spiritists such metaphors as the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and the candle which is not put under the measure or under the bed when it is lighted, but on the candlestick, that all who enter the house may see the light and be enlightened? These words of Jesus refer to all ages, and apply to all men who became the apostles of a revelation which they seek to propagate by word and example.

You are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" at the present day as respects the New Revelation, as were the disciples of Christ for the revelation which he brought them by the Gospel teaching. Need we say, You have received the light, but not for yourselves alone, and you should share it with your brethren according to the necessities of each? Enlighten them; raise the torch which sheds around this blessed light, and wave it aloft that its rays may shine on all sides, that all may be enlightened.

Digitized by Google

When Jesus said, "There is nothing hidden which shall not be known, and nothing secret which shall not be brought to light; he that hath ears to hear, let him hear," he spoke of the future. Jesus gave the men of that period teachings which were appropriate for them, and seeds which should bear fruit in the future. His obscure discourses were intended to be understood by future generations, and some have been chosen to comprehend this. That is, some men have not accepted the letter literally, but have sought for the spirit, comprehending that the mission of Jesus was not to set a barrier to human intelligence by assigning definite limits to it, but rather to open space and the future before progressive minds.

Christ spoke in figures and symbols, because human intelligence was not yet strong enough to bear the weight of the revelations which were hidden under the veil of these parables. Judge of this, ye who still warp them. Nothing which man ought to know should remain concealed, and man has reached a point where his knowledge ought to increase rapidly. But let not your pride imagine that the time for the accomplishment of all things has arrived. Your spirits are still too much darkened, and you are still like inexperienced children who approach the fire imprudently, and are severely burned. Be careful, and watch over yourselves. Warm yourselves at the fire which God prepares for you, but imitate the prudence of Moses, and do not yet approach the burning bush too closely, lest you should be consumed by the flames. Be patient; God is preparing great events for your regeneration; prepare for them while you quietly and steadily follow the path which we trace out for you. We will lead to the spot whence flows the infinite light, but let us spread our protecting wings over your eyes, which are too weak to endure its powerful rays.

Your conscience is the torch of your heart and mind. If your conscience is pure, your heart and spirit will be en lightened, and everything in them will be luminous, for you will be aided, inspired and protected by good spirits. If your conscience is evil and impure, your heart and spirit

Digitized by Google

will be in darkness, for you will have become the prey of the evil spirits of error and lying. See, therefore, that your conscience, which is the light within you, does not become true darkness to your heart and spirit by its impurity. You will retain peace within you by preaching what you teach by your own example.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 17-19. LUKE, CHAP. XVI.—VERSE 17.

Jesus came to Fulfil the Law.

Matth. v. (17) Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to complete. (18) For verily I say unto you that until heaven and earth pass away, one iota or one dot shall not pass from the law until all things be fulfilled. (19) Therefore if any one shall annul the least of these commandments, and shall teach men thus, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of the heavens, but whoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of the heavens.

Luke xvi. (17) And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one dot of the law to fail.

§ 77. Jesus speaks of the law, and not of the additions which have been made to it, or the traditions which have been substituted for it; human maxims, commandments, and doctrines, which men have established as the result of their interpretations, which have changed or falsified the sense and application of the law. When Christ said that he was not come to destroy the law but to complete it, he showed men that the morality which he preached was the same as that which had been previously taught by the messengers of the Lord, whether missionary spirits or prophets; but that everything must follow the natural course of progress.

The law which had been given to men before was proportioned to their development. It included the promise of the future, and Jesus came to complete it. He himself, while fulfilling the prophecies, pronounced others for future ages, which he is still about to accomplish by means of the promised "Comforter," "the Spirit of Truth."

The spirits of the Lord come to bring men the New Revelation, which you may call the Revelation of the

Digitized by Google

Revelation. They come to enlighten and develop the intelligence, and to purify the hearts of men in the crucible of science, charity, and love.

They say, like Jesus, "Do not think that we are come to destroy the law and the prophets." Nothing of the law can pass away, for the law is universal love, which must continue to increase until it has brought you to the eternal throne of your Father. We come to repeat, to explain, and help you to comprehend in spirit and in truth the sublime and simple moral doctrine of the Master, the secret teachings which he delivered to men, and the obscure prophecies which he pronounced during his earthly mission. We are not come to destroy the law, but to accomplish it, by freeing the law of Christ from the additions which have been made to it, the traditions which have been substituted for it, and the doctrines based on human interpretations which have changed or falsified its meaning and application. We come to restore the whole truth of the law, to establish unity of belief in the world, and to guide you all (apart from the various external religions which now divide and separate you) to fraternity by practising mutual justice, love and charity, according to material, moral and intellectual order.

Spiritism is the confirmation of Christianity, not as men have made and established it, but as Jesus instituted it, by his Gospel teaching being properly understood and practised in spirit and in truth. What is the Christianity of Jesus, if it is not the universal religion which should enfold all men in the same circle of love and charity?

Not an iota of the law shall pass away without being fulfilled, for the Hebrew law was the stepping-stone to the law of Christ; and we repeat that Spiritism is the confirmation and means of fulfilment of the latter. The law consists entirely in the love of God above all things, and of your neighbour as yourselves, which includes the observance of the Decalogue, and the practice of the law of love, always and everywhere, and towards all. He who shall break one of its least commandments, will be the least in the kingdom of the heavens. That is, after expiation in the errant state, he

Digitized by Google

will be obliged to repair his errors, and to progress by re-incarnation upon your earth, or on inferior planets, according to the degree of his guilt.

But he who shall do and teach them shall be called great in the kingdom of the heavens. That is, he will raise himself to the superior planets in proportion to his moral advancement and the progress which he has acquired, and will continually advance, through humility, in knowledge, charity and love. He who is appointed to teach, and does not practise what he teaches, is not only guilty of the evil which he has done, but of the evil which he has caused through contradicting his words by his actions.

Spiritists, do not act like the chiefs of the ancient synagogues, or like the Scribes and Pharisees of your own or former ages, for you would be very guilty; you, who have received light to enlighten your own path, as well as that of your brethren.

You, above all others, ought to preach by example; for this is the only preaching which leads to good results. Remember the words of Christ: "They lay heavy burdens upon your shoulders, which they will not touch with one of their fingers. If you would walk in the ways of the Lord, and come before him gloriously followed by all whom you have redeemed, begin by taking on your own shoulders the burden which you would impose on others. Show them how to make it light, and you may then induce them to bear their share of it. Imitate the life of Jesus; everything is contained in this. He himself taught all things by example; do you also teach by example, and let your words never be anything but the counterpart of your actions.

Spiritists ought above all things to practise the law of love which they preach with holiness and sincerity. If you wish to attract the masses you must show them the benefit which they may expect. Let your conduct exhibit the submission and love which you feel towards your God, and the practical love and charity which you feel towards your brethren. Never set yourselves up as models, but act as such. Be gentle towards those who reject your teachings.

Digitized by Google

Wait till their eyes are opened, and they are able to bear them. When the oculist removes the thick film which hides the light of day from a blind man, does he let him enjoy the light all at once? Not so, for it would dazzle him, and the brightness of day would be too brilliant for his enfeebled organs, and plunge him back into a deep night from which he would perhaps emerge no more. Thus you should temper the light of truth to the eyes of the mentally blind. Try with prudence to sow the seed in their hearts gradually. It will spring up, and although the fruits which it should produce may not ripen under your eyes, a time will come when your hearers will be profited. Your teachings will return to their thoughts at the hour of material death; the light will illumine the path; and you will have helped them to pass through a crisis which is very trying to matter. Do not dispute with the incredulous, nor take offence at ridicule; be calm and dignified in your faith, and persevering in your good works. Scatter the seed freely, and it will fall on good ground, and spring up there; but cultivate the good soil, that one grain may bring forth thirty-fold, another sixty-fold, and another a hundred-fold; for each of those whom you have brought to the faith will also diffuse the faith around him. Thus like the ripe ears, loaded with grain, which are shaken by the wind and scatter their seeds broadcast, the truth will spread, and increase in wholesome fruits.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 20–26. LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 54–59.

Abounding Justice—Evil Word—Reconciliation.

Matth. v. (20) For I say unto you, That unless your righteousness shall greatly exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens. (21) You have heard that it was said to the ancients, Do not kill; for whoever shall kill shall be liable to judgment. (22) But I say unto you, that every one who shall be rashly angry with his brother shall be liable to the judgment, and whoever shall say to his brother, Worthless fellow, shall be liable to the Sanhedrim; and whoever shall say, Vile wretch, shall be liable to the Gehenna of fire. (23) Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, (24)

Digitized by Google

Leave there thy gift before the altar, and withdraw; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. (25) Agree with thy adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary should deliver thee to the judge, and the judge should deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. (26) Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt in no wise come out thence until thou hast paid the last halfpenny.

Luke xii. (54) And he said to the crowds, When you see the cloud rising in the west, you say immediately, A storm is coming, and it happens thus. (55) And when the south wind blows, you say, There will be a sirocco, and it happens. (56) Ye hypocrites, you know how to examine the face of the earth and the sky; and how is it that ye do not examine this age? (57) And why do you not also judge of yourselves what is right? (58) For when thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, take care to be released from him on the way, lest at any time he should drag thee to the judge, and the judge should deliver thee to the officer, and the officer should cast thee into prison. (59) I say unto thee that thou shalt never come out thence until thou hast paid even the last mite.

§ 78. Men should always strive diligently to discern what is just according to material and moral order, in their relations with their brethren. The day will come when justice will be practised after another fashion than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, without pride and without hypocrisy. These passages are also designed to teach men how to obey the commands of the Lord; not passively, by abstaining from forbidden acts, but by practising all the virtues which are opposed to those faults—by love, gratitude and submission towards him who has set before us all the full rule of conduct that we must follow in order to attain to him. Happy are those who follow it without departing from it.

Such expressions as "worthless fellow," "the judgment," "the Sanhedrim" and the "Gehenna of fire," are symbolical. God judges man according to his actions, and consequently if man fails in gentleness and kindness towards his neighbour, and insults him, he will be punished by him who desires that men should act towards each other like brethren. The words Sanhedrim and Gehenna are only emblems designed to impress upon men that they will be judged for their actions, and suffer the punishment they have deserved, which will be appropriate to the fault which they have committed, and to the nature and degree of their guilt.

Digitized by Google

The words of Jesus (Matth. v. 22) apply to all ages and to all men who have fallen short of the universal law of love. Most assuredly the Spiritist who fails in this law will be punished more severely than he who has not yet perceived the light, or he who has seen it and has not dared to accept it on account of conscientious scruples, which are not faults which deserve punishment, but which merely retard the progress of the spirit, who will be sufficiently punished by his own regrets.

The words of Jesus (Matth. v. 23, 24) teach man that he should exercise forbearance towards him who has offended him by extending his hand to aid him to return. Secondly, they point out to the man who has committed a fault, that he should immediately endeavour to repair it. Act therefore as the Divine Master himself acts every day. Does he not call to you incessantly? Does not he whom you have so grievously offended in all things continually hold out his arms to embrace you? Does he not call you to repentance by every possible means? and do you not often see him heap kindness on those who appear to you the most unworthy, simply to awaken gratitude in unworthy hearts, and to lead them back to himself?

The expressions in Matth. v. 25, are simply material images to teach man the conduct which he ought to pursue towards his brethren with respect to the judgment of God. Hasten to pardon your enemies, and to become reconciled to your adversary while you still travel the road of life, for you do not know if you may not be stopped on the road by death, and led before the Supreme Judge, who reads all hearts, and often finds many traces of evil passions which you do not look for. Therefore reconcile yourselves to those who have offended you and pardon them, as you would wish your heavenly Father to pardon you, if you needed it as much.

Jesus said, "You shall in no wise come out thence until you have paid the last mite." These words imply, man is the debtor of God, who has given him all things to put to a good use. Consequently, if he does not practise the

Digitized by Google

virtues which he has been taught, and rejects his brethren, he will be rejected in consequence of the eternally harmonious action of the law of justice and love.

LUKE, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 1–5.

Repentance.

(1) And there were present at that time some who brought him news about the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. (2) And Jesus answering, said unto them, Do you think that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such things? (3) I tell you, Nay; but if you do not repent, you shall all perish in like manner. (4) And those eighteen, upon whom the tower at Siloam fell, and slew them, do you think that these were guilty beyond all the inhabitants of Jerusalem? (5) I tell you, Nay; but unless you repent, you shall all perish thus.

§ 79. The Jews considered that mental sufferings and calamities, and physical evils, were so many proofs that the wrath of God rested on the victim, and therefore that he was a guilty man. Jesus desired to put an end to this mistake, without going into explanations respecting anterior existences, the half-obliterated belief in which was only supposed to extend to certain privileged spirits who had obtained the favour of reincarnating themselves. The Jews, who believed in reincarnation, thought that it applied only to extraordinary messengers, such as Elijah, whom they recognized in John the Baptist.

The law of reincarnation, which was obscurely indicated by Jesus in his conversation with Nicodemus, was not intended to be explained to men until the era of Spiritism, when they would have become capable of receiving it. This revelation raises the veil under which the letter of the Gospel had concealed this law.

Jesus reminds those who listen to him that they, like others, are living on earth to expiate their faults, both known and unknown. You should not blame the man who is overtaken by calamity; but consider your own heart, and reflect whether you yourself have not deserved to suffer the same trial or punishment.

Digitized by Google

LUKE, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 6–9.

Parable of the Barren Fig-tree.

(6) And he spoke this parable, A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and came to seek for fruit on it, and found none. (7) And he said to the gardener, Behold I come three years seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I do not find it; cut it down, why should it cumber the ground? (8) And he, answering, said unto him, Master, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig round it, and manure it; (9) If perchance it shall bear fruit; and if not, thou shall cut it down afterwards.

§ 80. The moral of this parable is obvious. It is an emblem of the long-suffering of the Lord, and of the benevolent and devoted intervention of the spirits who watch over your welfare and progress. If a man rebels against the inspirations of his guardian angel, and permits nothing to soften his cold and ungrateful nature, but allows his earthly existence to pass away without bringing forth the fruits which the experiences which he has selected should mature, he resembles the barren fig-tree. This worthless tree yields no fruit, in spite of the exertions of the gardener, who has dug round and manured it; and it is therefore cut down—that is, the backward spirit is removed from the sphere where his existence could only be injurious, and after having undergone expiation in the errant state is forced to resume the course of reparation, expiation and progress by means of fresh experiences. But he is incarnated on inferior planets, as a hardened offender, and he carries with him the secret penalty of his previous incarnation. On the other hand, the man who finally opens his heart to the inspirations of the good spirits around him, resembles the fig-tree, which benefits, though late, by the attention bestowed upon it, and begins to bear fruit. He will not be cut down, but only removed from the world, and received with affection by those whose cares have roused him from his lethargy. The man who recognizes his errors will indeed be subjected to the expiations necessary to repair them; but will not be banished to an inferior condition, like those hardened offenders whom nothing can soften.

Digitized by Google

LUKE, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 10–13.

The Infirm Woman.

(10) And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath-day; (11) And behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. (12) And when Jesus saw her, he called her, and said to her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. (13) And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

§ 81. The Jews attributed to Satan (that is, to evil spirits) everything which they could not understand or explain. When Jesus cured infirmities, the bystanders often ascribed the cause to possession, whereas the Master says merely, "disease." But observe that although the narrator, writing in accordance with Hebrew ideas, said that this woman had a spirit of infirmity, Jesus himself said, "Thou art loosed from thine infirmity;" and laid his hands upon her, which he only did in cases of material cures, instead of commanding the spirit to depart from her, as in cases of possession; that is, of obsession or subjugation.

This woman was afflicted with softening of the spinal marrow, causing weakness of the spine, which deprived her of the power to raise herself. The spirito-magnetic action employed by Jesus restored the needful strength to the enfeebled organs, and the woman stood up. But you could not understand any explanation respecting the agencies by which the cure was effected, because you have not yet acquired a knowledge of the nature and effects of the fluids which surround you. Any questions would therefore be superfluous. Confine yourselves to spirito-magnetic action—that is, to spiritual magnetism, which may be combined with the action of your own fluids.

Whenever you make use of magnetism in faith, for the sole purpose of relieving the sufferings of humanity, your guides aid you by spiritual magnetism, which is imperceptible and invisible to you. If you pray fervently for aid, their action can be still further increased. Practise this celestial science which the Lord has entrusted to you, with ardour, perseverance, and disinterestedness. If you are devoted

Digitized by Google

and benevolent, you may thus raise up those who fall, make the deaf hear and the blind see. You can heal wounds, stanch the flow of blood, strengthen the weak, and make the crooked straight. We do not say that your will-power would be sufficient alone, for you are not yet sufficiently disengaged from matter; but perseverance and the secret aid and intervention of your guides, will enable you to obtain with time results which the will of the Master alone was sufficient to effect instantaneously. We repeat, do not neglect the treasure which the Lord has entrusted to you. Serious practice and perseverance will develop your powers, and if you exert them in faith, the Lord will bless your efforts.

LUKE, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 14–17.

Observance of the Sabbath.

(14) And the ruler of the synagogue, being angry that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath-day, answered and said to the crowd, There are six days in which men ought to work; therefore come to be healed on these, and not on the Sabbath-day. (15) Then the Lord answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, does not each of you loose his ox or his ass from the manger on the Sabbath, and lead him out to water? (16) And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom behold Satan hath bound for these eighteen years, to be released from this bondage on the Sabbath-day? (17) And when he had said this, all his opponents were ashamed, and all the crowd rejoiced at all the glorious acts which he performed.

§ 82. Moses instituted the Sabbath as a safeguard against the abuse of power and authority. It was necessary to speak strongly to compel the obedience of these hard-hearted people who were always ready to rebel. Moses gave them a law to protect them against themselves; otherwise their slaves and even their cattle would have been overwhelmed by the burdens laid upon them.

The Sabbath was a compulsory rest, imposed even on avarice and cupidity, which were forced to slumber to allow their victims time to regain their strength.

Material laws are for material men; but intelligent laws are for intelligent men. Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark ii. 27).

Digitized by Google

That is, the Sabbath was designed for the repose of man. It sets a barrier against the excessive toil that he might sometimes impose on himself, but more frequently on others; but it was not intended that any reasonable observance of it should be forced upon men. Rest your bodies from fatiguing labours, but never let your hearts rest from doing good.

Do not be surprised that when Jesus, as he said himself, had released the woman from her infirmity, he should have expressed himself somewhat differently to the ruler of the synagogue. Jesus always conformed his language to the ideas of those to whom he spoke, that they might understand or at least listen to him; but the knowledge of the real import of his words was reserved for the future. If he had told the people that he had only cured a disease, he would not have been believed. He therefore used the customary expressions in order not to conflict with the opinions and prejudices of the listeners, and that they might believe in the cure which he had effected; and said, "Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham whom Satan (understand here disease or infirmity) has bound for these eighteen years, to be released from this bondage on the Sabbath-day?" But at the same time he said to the woman, "Thou art released from thy disease or infirmity."

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 27–30.

Evil Thoughts.

(27) Ye have heard that it was said to the ancients, Do not commit adultery. (28) But I say to you that every one who looks upon a woman with evil desire, has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (29) And if your right eye should cause you to offend, pluck it out, and cast it from you; for it is profitable for you that one of your members should be destroyed, and not that your whole body should be cast into Gehenna. (30) And if your right hand should cause you to offend, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should be destroyed, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Gehenna.

§ 83. These expressions of Jesus are symbolical, and are not to be understood literally. They are designed to teach men that it is not enough to abstain from all evil words and

Digitized by Google

actions, but that even evil thoughts must be abandoned. The "right eye" and "right hand," which "cause men to offend," are also wholly material images, appropriate to the age, and intended to make a profound impression on material men. These words of Jesus form the continuation of those which have been already explained in § 78. It is not enough to refrain from doing evil, but man should practise good also; and to that end he must destroy the source of everything evil in himself, without looking upon it as any sacrifice, and thus cleanse the heart; for although men disregard a guilty thought, it is nevertheless sinful in the sight of the Lord, whose eyes are too pure to regard anything but the spirit in man; and who cannot regard the slightest blemish with approval. Evil desire is equivalent to adultery, because it is a sin of the spirit.

MATTHEW, CHAP V.—VERSES 31–37. LUKE, CHAP. XVI.—VERSE 18.

Marriage—Oaths.

Matth. v. (31) It has been said, Whoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce. (32) But I say unto you that whoever shall put away his wife, except on account of fornication, causes her to commit adultery, and if any one should marry her who is put away, he commits adultery. (33) Again, you have heard that it was said to the ancients, Do not perjure yourselves, but perform to the Lord your oaths. (34) But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God. (35) Neither by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. (36) Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou art not able to make one hair white or black. (37) But let your word be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for what is beyond this is of evil.

Luke vi. (18) And every one who divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is separated from her husband, commits adultery.

§ 84. The teaching of Jesus concerning divorce was designed to prevent men divorcing their wives on slight pretexts. It was not said in vain, though figuratively, that God created a man and woman in the beginning as the basis of humanity. Man should not be so brutal as to regard woman as created only for his pleasure, but should comprehend that the Lord has created her like himself, a

Digitized by Google

spirit equal to him in all things, and that he should bear the joys and sorrows of human life with her. If the physical constitution of the woman is weaker, and she needs protection from man, it is only to emphasize more forcibly the duty of the strong to aid the weak.

Although man is often ready to repudiate the companion whom he has chosen, do not lay the blame on the laws of Nature, but on human customs. It is these which make the union of man and woman a commercial transaction, instead of the union of two sympathetic spirits who are happy to pass through the experiences of humanity together. When man abandons his evil instincts and understands the real object of his existence, he will no longer desire facilities of divorce.

We will give you further explanations on this subject in our remarks on Matthew xix. 1–9, and Mark x. 1–12.

The words of Jesus respecting oaths were designed to put an end to an abuse among the Hebrews. The oath is useless for men whose hearts are pure, for they would never think of breaking or denying their word; and Jesus spoke to those who desire to walk in the ways of the Lord. But in the present state of man, the oath is a salutary check imposed on him by civilization; and yet how few respect it! The obligation of taking oaths will disappear from human laws when Spiritism shall reign on the earth. Yes, when men have abandoned evil passions, and have killed the *old man*, the new man, the man born of God, will have no need to say more than Yea, yea; Nay, nay. But you are still distant from that happy age.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 38–42, LUKE, CHAP. V.—VERSES 29, 30.

Patience, Resignation, Charity and Morality.

Matth. v. (38) You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. (39) But I say unto you, Resist not evil; but whoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. (40) And if any one should sue thee, and take away thy cloak, give up to him thy coat also. (41) And if any one should compel thee

Digitized by Google

to go one mile, go with him two. (42) Give to him that asketh thee, and do not turn away from him who would borrow of thee.

Luke vi. (29) To him who strikes thee on one cheek offer also the other, and from him who taketh away thy cloak, withhold not thy coat also. (30) And give to every one who asketh thee, and from him who taketh away thy goods demand them not back.

§ 85. The meaning of these words, when interpreted according to the spirit and not according to the letter, is obvious, if you consider the age and the men to whom Jesus spoke; and the object of his mission, which was so full of self-abnegation, devotion, love and charity. He scattered seeds, both by teaching and example, which were destined to bear fruit both at the time and afterwards.

The precepts of the old law were designed to inspire fear in men who could not be influenced by any other motive. Their natures were violent, and they could not receive a law of mildness and gentleness. In order to cause the rights of others to be respected, it was necessary that everyone should be firmly convinced that he would be doomed to suffer as much or more injury than he had caused his brethren.

On the other hand, the law of Christ proclaimed the love and self-abnegation which all men should feel even towards those who wish them ill, and seek to injure them; as well as to their own friends, and those who are near and dear to them. Follow this admirable law, for everything is comprised in it.

(Matth. v. 38, 39.)—Jesus taught man to set an example of gentleness and resignation. Before resenting an injury, man should try every possible means to reclaim the offender, and should even lay aside all pride, and humble himself before him who has injured him, if needful, to recal him to the path of life. Nor should man ever seek to justify himself, whatever may be the gravity of the offence or injury. This is revolting to human pride, but Jesus set you a noble example, although there was no need for him to say, in reviewing his conduct, "I have committed the evil which I have suffered," or "I was capable of committing it." He who was perfectly pure and innocent endured outrage in en-

Digitized by Google

deavouring to enlighten his persecutors. This is the lesson which you should draw from these words.

But as everything must be appropriate to the spirit and intelligence of an age, do not seek to abolish the laws which govern you, and which, though still very imperfect, spiritually speaking, are necessary to your safety. Allow the law to take its course, after you have in vain employed every means which charity suggests to recall those who have departed from love and charity, by heaping wrongs upon you, or unjustly injuring your human interests.

(Matth. v. 40.)—This verse was intended to point out to man that the kindness he was willing to show towards his guilty brother, might be sufficient to reclaim him. It is not to be supposed that Jesus intended to encourage theft or violence, by yielding to, or even exceeding, their demands; but you know that forcible language is necessary to make an impression on those whose intelligence is dull. Jesus was therefore obliged to set such examples of love and self-renunciation before the men of that age, that even if they tried to follow his precepts at a very great distance, they would nevertheless be on the right track.

(Matth. v. 41.)—Never refuse to satisfy any wish of your brother, as far as possible; and not only do not refuse him, but even endeavour to exceed the limits which he himself has set to your kindness, in the effort to oblige him. Do not content yourself with granting him the favour which he desires, but see if there is not some greater need hidden behind his request. Study the desires and necessities of your brother, and render him the same services which you would wish him to render to you, if you were in his place. You should also make allowance for his feelings of delicacy in rendering a service which he has not ventured to ask.

There is an under-current of moral and material charity implied in the words of Jesus, "Give to him who asketh of thee, and from him who would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." Do not refuse to give alms, either with your purse, heart, or intelligence, according to your means.

Do not attempt to deprive those who have obtained any-

Digitized by Google

thing from you by unfair or even violent means, of their ill-gotten gains; but rather try to turn them to their moral advancement by showing them your mildness, your good-will, and your readiness to be useful to them in spite of their misconduct, always within the limits pointed out by your intelligence, and more especially your heart. Do not encourage vice, but seek to reform it by the means which Christ has placed in your hands.

In the present state of human society, and according to its actual degree of moral advancement, it is absolutely necessary, for the safety of public and social order, to resist injustice, outrage and spoliation, by the lawful methods of human law and justice, to hinder a brother who desires to commit evil from failing in his trials, or to reclaim a brother who has already done evil, to a path where he will not fail in future. Human punishment, like divine justice, should aim at the moral improvement and progress of the criminal.

Privileged natures, Christians or Spiritists, may endeavour to follow the example set by the Divine Master, even at present. Let them follow these Gospel precepts of humility, abnegation, renunciation, charity and love, with the hope and intention of improving the condition of the good, and in causing the wicked to blush and to reflect; such precepts and examples, constantly repeated, cannot fail to bear fruit in future ages. O men! endeavour to understand the divine law, and you will feel the value of these precepts. It is not yet given you to practise them, and your laws are appropriate to the present needs of society; but the day will come when the only tribunal to which men will be subjected and the only judge worthy to shed light on their differences will be God, and all will bow before his tribunal.

Yes, the day will come when the conscience of man himself will enable him to judge his own thoughts and actions, and he will see himself as he is. God, the only guide of his conscience, will speak to him and judge him; and he will then listen to this divine voice, which he has rejected so often, and will no longer commit any action without having submitted it to his control. But you are still very far from

Digitized by Google

that happy time when you will walk under the eyes of your Father in integrity and love.

You have not yet arrived at the period of the fulfilment of the Gospels, just as Moses and the prophets of Israel had not yet arrived at the fulfilment of the law of God. You must wait for the moral revolution which begins with the predicted era of Spiritism and the New Revelation. Wait for the results; and if you do not see them fulfilled with your bodily eyes, it will be granted you to follow them with your spirit, and to work with more efficiency at the fulfilment of all the words of Jesus.

§ 86. Is the period when the Gospels will be fulfilled the time when Spiritism shall have enlightened the world, and when the earth has become the exclusive residence of good spirits, after those who remain guilty and rebellious have been removed?

Yes, this will be the time when man shall have laid aside his robe of impurity to assume the robe of innocence which our love is weaving for him.

§ 87. Will the slow and progressive moral revelution necessary for the fulfilment of the words of Jesus be accompanied by a physical revolution affecting man, the various kingdoms of nature, and the constitution of our globe?

The physical revolution which must take place contemporaneously with the moral revolution (as we will explain to you at the proper time) was predicted by Jesus during his earthly mission, and was recorded, though veiled, in the Gospels, and in the revelation made to John in the Isle of Patmos.

Physical progress takes place contemporaneously with moral progress. The requirements of nature change when those of the soul are purified; and little by little, by a transition which it would be difficult for you to appreciate, the physical constitution of man and his globe, which is already modified, will be progressively transformed. This may be confirmed to you by the various geological phases which the earth has already passed through, and it will still be progressively purified and modified to provide a human dwelling corresponding to the purity of spirits who have laid aside all their vices and weaknesses. The ascending

Digitized by Google

scale in the path of progress will be pursued by the animals, plants, and all the kingdoms of nature, at the same time as by man, to maintain the harmony of your planet. You may easily perceive, even now, that fierce or intractable animals begin to submit to the yoke of man. This is a beginning, and everything must feel the effects of progress towards the good time to come; but it will be long and difficult. Economize and concentrate your powers to attain and rest happily in the love of the Father. That is, aid as far as your moral and intellectual elevation will permit, in the fulfilment of his designs and labours in universal life and harmony.

§ 88. Do not the words, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," refer, under a veil, to the justice of God, and to the purification and progress of the guilty spirit by expiation and reincarnation?

Yes, certainly. Everything recorded in the Old Testament has an allegorical character, which you will be able to understand as you advance in spiritual science.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V.—VERSES 43–48. LUKE, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 27, 28; 32–36.

Love and Charity towards all.

Matth. v. (43) Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. (44) But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who threaten you, and drive you away. (45) That ye may be the sons of your Father who is in the heavens; for he causeth his sun to rise on the wicked and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and on the unjust. (46) For if ye love those who love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the tax-gatherers do this? (47) And if you salute your brethren only, what do ye which is extraordinary? Do not the tax-gatherers do this also? (48) Be ye therefore perfect as your Father who is in the heavens is perfect.

Luke vi. (27) But I say unto you who hear, Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you. (28) Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who threaten you. (32) And if you love those who love you, what grace is it in you? for sinners also love those who love them. (33) And if you do good to those who do good to you, what grace is it in you? for sinners likewise do the same. (34) And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what grace is it in you? for sinners also lend to sinners, that they may receive an equal share. (35) But over and above this, love your enemies, and do good, without expecting to receive anything back, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be called the sons of the Highest, for He is kind to the wretched and the wicked. (36) Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

Digitized by Google

§ 89. Follow the law of love and charity everywhere and always, towards all, whether you know them or not, and whether they are friends or enemies. The whole doctrine is included in these words, for the practice of the law of love and charity implies the practice of all virtues and of all duties. If God grants the bounties of nature to all mankind, why should man refuse to share with his brethren what he holds in trust from their common Father? Judgment belongs to God alone. His judgment is perfect, and free from all the private interests which so often warp yours. Leave to God the task of judging those whom he has made; for he alone is fully acquainted with their hearts and characters.

Never do anything merely for the sake of reward. All your actions ought to be performed from the love of duty, and from love and gratitude towards God; for if your actions are only an offering made to God in view of the return which you expect from him—you, men who can accomplish so little—you act the part of the usurer in sight of eternity, and as long as you are influenced by this selfish motive, you cannot be the sons of the Most High. Those acts alone are rewarded which are the fruit of love and devotion.

Your weakness is alarmed and your pride revolted by the words of Jesus, "Love your enemies." In practising this precept, it is not enough to feel neither hate, ill-feeling, nor desire for vengeance towards an enemy, or to abstain from everything, both in word or deed, which might injure or even annoy him, or to pardon and forget the evil that he has done you, or continues to do you. You must return your enemies good for evil in everything, always and everywhere, and under all circumstances, with sincerity of thought and heart. Labour thus unceasingly to recall them to a better mind. It is needful to do good to those who hate you, sincerely, and with the feeling of universal love which should increase in the heart of man, and bring him nearer and nearer to God. You should bless those who curse you, and pray for those who persecute you and revile you, but with the heart, and not with the lips. He who does good to his

Digitized by Google

enemies, and blesses them and prays for them in this spirit, has learned to love them.

Endeavour to free yourselves from material influences, by the practice of love and charity, and by prayer, and you will perceive that the kindness, pity and benevolence which your heavenly Father practises towards the ungrateful, the just and the unjust, the good and the wicked, will become more and more developed in your own hearts, under the action and influence of your moral purification.

(Matth. v. 47.)—Exert and practise with sincerity all the virtues which have been taught you, to lead you to him who is perfect.

The new revelation of Spiritism, the Revelation of the Revelation, and the third and latest manifestation of the goodness of God to men, is the light to enlighten your path, and to give sight to the blind. Do not reject this light, but resolve to practise its teachings with heartfelt sincerity. The spirits of the Lord will explain and enable you to understand the teachings of Jesus, and inspire you to practise them sincerely, fully and intelligently. You will then attain the good which is set before you; the path will be long, tortuous, and full of stumbling-blocks and difficulties, but light and blessings await you at last.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 1-4.

Humility, Disinterestedness, and Secrecy in the Performance of Good Works.

(1) Take heed not to practise your works of mercy before men, to be seen by them; for otherwise you have no reward from your Father in the heavens. (2) Therefore when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may be extolled by men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their full reward. (3) But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; (4) That thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret himself shall reward thee in the light.

§ 90. These words need no explanation, for you can all understand them. Act with the design of doing good, and not for the sake of human praise. Never even seek for the

Digitized by Google

spiritual benefit which you may receive; endeavour to follow the steps of Jesus, for he had nothing to gain by his self-devotion. He was good and charitable to the utmost limits, simply to be good and useful to men, who deserved it so little.

Always act thus, and avoid the praise of men. This generally carries with it a subtle poison which sooner or later proves grievously injurious to the heart which has received it with pleasure. Act only to receive the approval of your own conscience, and when it tells you in your heart that you have done well, turn with joy to your heavenly Father, and thank him that he has granted you the means of obtaining his approval. As for reward, you may look for it from his love; and benevolent spirits will tell you what it is. In all cases, let not your left hand know what your right doeth, but practise material and moral charity with all the quick intelligence and delicacy of a heart moved only by disinterestedness, sincerity, humility, devotion and love. In the spiritual sense, and in the idea of Jesus, the word "alms," which conveys a debasing and humiliating sense to you, signifies material and moral charity.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 5–15. LUKE, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 1–4.

The Lord's Prayer.

Matth. vi. (5) And when thou prayest, be not like the hypocrites, who like to pray standing in the synagogues, and at the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their full reward. (6) But thou when thou prayest, go into thy chamber and shut the door, and pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee in the light. (7) And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions, like the Gentiles, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. (8) So do not imitate them, for behold, your Father knoweth what you need before you ask him. (9) After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father in the heavens, hallowed be thy name: (10) Thy kingdom come: thy will be done, as in heaven, also on the earth. (11) Give us to-day the bread which suffices us; (12) And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. (13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the

Digitized by Google

glory throughout the ages. Amen. (14) For if you forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; (15) And if you do not forgive men their offences, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Luke xi. (1) And it came to pass that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. (2) And he said to them, When ye pray, say, Our Father, who art in the heavens; thy will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth. (3) Give us day by day our bread which suffices us; (4) And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive every one who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil.

§ 91. The explanations respecting prayers are the same as those respecting almsgiving. Never do anything for the purpose of winning the approbation of men, but let all your actions be accomplished with the sole desire of rendering to the Lord the homage which is his due, which is simply the sincere and disinterested observance of the laws of love and charity which he has imposed upon you. When prescribing secrecy, in silence and privacy, apart from the gaze of men, both for prayer and almsgiving, Jesus forbade exterior pomp and ceremonies, and long prayers made with the lips and not with the heart, both at that period and in future.

Let us repeat together, beloved pupils, the prayer which the Master sketched out for men, that you may understand its spiritual sense and import.

"Our Father:" our Creator, from whom we all derive our being. "In the heavens:" who art so exalted above every human creature, that thy dwelling is infinite space, where our impure eyes cannot behold thee.

"Hallowed be thy name." Let all thy creatures bless thy name, and let all their thoughts and actions show how greatly they honour the mighty Source from whence they have sprung; and let them not harbour any thought in their hearts which might be offensive to the All-pure.

"Thy kingdom come." Let all men live submissive to thy law, and let all acknowledge and bless the source of their existence.

"Thy will be done, as in heaven, also on earth." Let all men acknowledge the immutable laws which thy will has

Digitized by Google

imposed upon them. Let them live submissive to those laws, and practise them with love and gratitude, that they may honour and worship thee, as the happy spirits yield unreserved submission to thy sublime will, and are happy in being its humble instruments and ministers.

"Give us to-day the bread which suffices us." O Lord, grant us every day the food which we require to sustain the existence which thou hast given us. Let the food be only our indispensable nourishment, without ministering in any way to our grosser appetites. Grant, O Lord, that we may be so sustained by this perishable food that we may rightly implore and receive the bread of life, which can alone lead us to the foot of thy eternity.

"Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." Let thy goodness extend over us, who are weak creatures, always rebelling against thy divine will. Pardon us, for we have often fallen, and we still stumble at every moment of our lives; O Lord, extend thy mercy to us. But as love and pardon are the law of our existence, if we fail to practise it, let thy justice extend over us. Thou hast told us through thy celestial messenger, our Master, the protector and ruler of our planet and its humanity, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and bless those who curse you." Having regard to these words, we ask, O Father of justice, that thou wilt render us our due, and pardon us in the same proportion that we may have pardoned the faults of our brethren.

"Lead us not into temptation." Give us strength, O God, to resist the evil instincts of our nature. Sustain our courage, and renew our strength, which so often fails us, and let the thought of thee always rise like an impassable barrier between the sin which displeases thee, and ourselves, thy unworthy servants, who nevertheless aspire to thy favour, that we may accomplish our earthly experiences without weakness or failure. "But deliver us from the evil." O Lord, grant that we may be surrounded by thy good spirits, and may be submissive to their inspirations, advice, and teachings. Let the purity of our hearts drive away the evil spirits who strive

Digitized by Google

incessantly to lead us astray, and so often entice us into the wrong path. Deliver us, O Lord, from their evil influence, and permit us to lead them to thee by our counsels and prayers, and especially by the moral example of our thoughts and actions.

"For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory throughout the ages. Amen." O Lord, thou alone art great above all things; thou alone, O God, art the sole creator of everything which moves in infinite space. O God, thou who art omnipotent in immensity, art our supreme judge, our Sovereign, and our well-beloved King. The homage of our hearts and our eternal songs of praise are due to thee. O Lord, grant that it may soon be given to us to unite our voices to those of the happy spirits who celebrate thy glory and greatness, and thy infinite goodness above all things. O Father, this is the desire which the humblest of thy children dares to express at thy footstool.

Dear brethren, meditate on this lesson which we give you on the Lord's Prayer, in the name of Christ, the Spirit of Truth. Let your hearts ponder on all that this sublime prayer has done to inspire men with emotions which have kept them in the right path, and to develop and strengthen right feelings of duty towards God and the human race, and towards themselves. Let your hearts ponder over all that this sublime prayer contains of love, gratitude and submission towards him who has been, is, and will be throughout eternity, the God of mercy, and of absolute and infinite perfections. May the God of Love bless you.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN.

With the concurrence of the Apostles.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 16–18.

Fasting.

(16) And when ye fast, be not sullen, like the hypocrites; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear to men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (17) But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face; (18) That thou appear

Digitized by Google

not unto men to fast, but to thy Father, who is in secret; and thy Father, seeing in secret, shall reward thee in the light.

§ 92. Fasting was a material and physical custom among the Hebrews. The words of Jesus were intended to prevent its becoming a source of hypocrisy or pride among those who conformed to it; for everything done for the purpose of attracting the attention and approval of man, loses before God the merit which it would have derived from purity of intention.

Do not understand the word fasting to be used here in its literal material sense, but symbolically, according to the spirit. When you do any act whatever, to be pleasing to God, to render him the homage which is his due; or submit to any privation, do not act in such a manner that men perceive it, and praise you; for where would then be your merit in the sight of God?

You must fully understand that when we speak of privations, we mean anything which can mortify your animal instincts, and to which you submit, that it may be agreeable to God. We do not tell you to impose on yourselves such privations and mortifications as may be injurious to the animal life, without destroying anything evil which might exist in the spirit. Man should maintain his health and strength by sufficient food, and by observing the laws of health, that he may be able to fulfil the law of labour, and all his various duties. But let him confine himself to what is necessary, observing frugality, temperance and sobriety in all things.

Do not subject yourselves to any privations which are useless, because they neither serve to purify your spirit nor to relieve your brethren. No privations are regarded by the eyes of God, except those which are profitable to your brethren. Deny yourselves, but let it be for others, with the feeling and object of charity. Reduce what you consider necessary for yourselves, in order to give to those who require it, and mortify your animal instincts by denying yourselves all useless or superfluous pleasures, that you may not give way to any manner of excess.

Digitized by Google

It is your soul which you must save and purify. Cleanse it from its faults, clothe it in impenetrable armour, and purify it by every means which reason suggests. Look only to your soul, and let the privations which you impose on your body be only a means of arresting the tendency to some excess, or of enabling you to share your necessaries with those who are in want.

You are spirits, though fallen very low. Train your spirit that it may be enabled to win back its share of the heritage which it has lost; and let all your efforts be directed to deliver it from this human life, and the bonds which ally it to the brute; but avoid any excess, both as regards the spirit and the body.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 19–23. LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 32–34.

The Pure Heart—The True and Only Treasure.

Matth. vi. (19) Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. (20) But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. (21) For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also. (22) The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body will be luminous. (23) But if thine eye be evil, thy whloe body shall be dark. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness?

Luke xii. (32) Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. (33) Sell your possessions, and give alms; make yourselves bags which do not grow old, an unfailing treasure in the heavens, where the thief does not come near, nor the moth destroy. (34) For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

§ 93. All these are material symbols. Seek for the spirit, and you will discover the true sense and the full meaning of the thought of Jesus. Do not seek that which forms the welfare of man on earth, when it comes into collision with the welfare of the spirit in space. Seek only, with love, that which may lead you towards your God, and let all your human actions be always guided by the thought that you are not of this world, but that you are wandering travellers, and ought to do your best to fulfil the experiences which

Digitized by Google

have been assigned to you, and the mission with which you have been entrusted, that you may return to your own country, and to the Master who sent you forth, and is able to take a good account of your actions.

Never allow yourselves to be dazzled by perishable splendours. Whatever lustre may surround them, they are a source of darkness to your spirit. Their light will perish with them; and you will find yourself lost in the shadow of an existence which is freed from the vanities of the earth, and has nothing to shelter it before God.

Never forget that your treasure is with God, the giver of all graces. If you continually dwell on this thought, your heart will always turn towards him; all your actions will tend towards your Creator; all your thoughts will rise towards him, and your heart will be with your treasure; with your God, the source of all good.

(Luke xii. 32.)—These words were addressed to the first disciples. Their number was very small in proportion to the task assigned them, but they were devoted spirits, and walked in the steps of the Lord. The words likewise apply to the first Spiritists, who are also few in number in comparison to the task before them, but who, like the first disciples of Jesus, are devoted spirits, walking in the ways of the Lord. You are thus encouraged, like the disciples, to confide in the Lord, and to hope in his promises.

(Luke xii. 33.)—Jesus did not mean that you should strip yourselves of all your worldly wealth; and that you could not otherwise attain to God. This interpretation, if carried out literally and not according to the spirit, would lead to absurd consequences, besides being opposed to all the teachings of the Master. The words mean that the possession and disposal of a man's property should be free from selfishness, and sanctified by charity. Good works, thus practised according to material, moral and intellectual order, form the only imperishable riches (spiritual riches), as an element of moral progress, which alone opens the path to perfection, and leads to God.

Digitized by Google

LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 13–21.

Avarice.

xii. (13) And a certain man in the crowd said to him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. (14) And he said to him, Man, who appointed me a judge or divider among you? (15) And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness, for the life of a man is not in the superfluity of his possessions. (16) And he spoke a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly, (17) And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store up my crops? (18) And he said, Thus will I do, I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and I will there store up all my crops and my goods, (19) And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast many good things laid up for many years, rest, eat, drink, and rejoice. (20) But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be demanded of thee, then whose shall be those things which thou hast provided? (21) Thus is he who layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich towards God.

§ 94. Jesus did not come to rule over the perishable world, nor to lay down material laws. What was the object of his mission? To withdraw the minds of material men from matter, and to break their idols of flesh, that he might exalt their spirits. Consequently he was obliged to speak strongly; and yet he is still only feebly hearkened to. Such was the spiritual sense and object of this parable. At the present day you are more advanced, and yet how often are we not obliged to repeat to you the words of Jesus! Lay up your treasure where neither moth nor rust destroy, nor thieves steal. How many among you, in spite of all our cares, and in spite of the daily preaching of the Gospel, trust only in their riches, and lay up worthless treasures, and bury themselves wholly in them! Remember your soul, for death may overtake you at any moment, even this very night. See, therefore, that the constant practice of love and charity may make you rich towards God at the moment when your soul will be required of you; and may lead you to free yourselves from the material desires and appetites, which incline you, according to the tendencies of your nature, to sensuality, pride, selfishness and avarice.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 24–34. LUKE, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 13–15; CHAP. XII.—VERSES 22–31.

God and Mammon.

Matth. vi. (24) No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. (25) Therefore I say unto you, be not over-anxious for your life, about what you shall eat or drink, nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not your life more than food, and your body than clothing? (26) Behold the winged creatures of heaven, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them; are ye not much better than they? (27) And who among you by anxious thought can add to his stature one cubit? (28) And why do ye take anxious thought for clothing? Look on the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, nor do they spin. (29) But I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was never arrayed like one of these. (30) And if God thus clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? (31) Therefore do not anxiously consider, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we put on. (32) (For the Gentiles seek after all these things;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. (33) But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be conferred upon you. (34) Therefore take no anxious thought for to-morrow, for to-morrow shall take anxious thought for its own affairs. Sufficient unto the day is its own evil.

Luke xvi. (13) No household servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. (14) And the avaricious Pharisees also, who were present, heard all these things, and they derided him. (15) And he said unto them, Ye are they who justify themselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts, for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

Luke xii. (22) And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no anxious thought for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. (23) The life is more than food, and the body than clothing. (24) Consider the ravens, for they sow not, neither do they reap, and have neither chamber nor barn, yet the Father feedeth them; how much better are ye than the fowls? (25) And which of you by taking anxious thought can add to his stature one cubit? (26) If therefore ye cannot accomplish that which is least, why take ye anxious thought for the rest? (27) Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: but I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (28) And if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe ye, O ye of little faith? (29) And seek not what ye shall eat, nor what ye shall drink, and do not excite yourselves. (30) For the nations of the world seek after all these things, but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. (31) Seek ye rather the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be conferred upon you.

Digitized by Google

§ 95. By such teachings Jesus endeavoured to turn the mind of man from matter, and to show him the object which he ought to set before him, and strive after above all things; the acquisition of eternal life, or, in other words, the life of a pure spirit who has completed all his experiences, and attained to a pre-eminent degree of purity. He then begins to comprehend God, and rejoices eternally throughout his spiritual life in approaching nearer and nearer to the fire of his omnipotence, though without ever being able to equal God.

Jesus spoke to men who were sunk in gross instincts. He had to contend with their rebellious natures, and was obliged to speak strongly that his words might be dimly remembered in their hardened hearts.

You must not argue, from these expressions of Jesus, that man should abandon his human existence and future to the care of God alone. He should not forget that he is a worker with a task to perform. He should not forget that a man who is subject to human necessities must seek to procure the means of sustaining his existence by work, and that a day will come when the workman's strength will fail.

Therefore, let him who can lawfully store up the grain which should form his subsistence in his old age, do so with integrity before the Lord, and gather it while he is in the flower of his age. Let him gather it carefully, without wasting a particle, for he should remember his brethren who have only been able to glean painfully a few scattered ears to maintain their daily existence, and who will then require their share of the grain which the Lord has permitted him to gather abundantly. Work according to your strength and opportunities, and always remember those who cannot, or can no longer do so. God blesses pure hearts and good intentions.

"You cannot serve God and Mammon." Mammon was a divinity worshipped by the ancient nations. He was lord of silver and gold, chiefly the latter, and, like the classical Jupiter, was the impersonation of the vices of humanity. Hence Jesus said, "You cannot serve two masters at once."

Digitized by Google

You cannot live a life agreeable to God if you follow all the allurements of worldly life. You cannot be at once both amiable and selfish, charitable and avaricious, self-forgetful and angry; gentle, humble-minded, simple, and proud; you cannot be active in material, moral and intellectual work, and idle; kind to all, and fond of violence and murder; you cannot serve two masters at once, for either you will love the one and hate the other, or you will serve the one and despise the other. He who attaches himself to worldly prosperity cannot live the life of self-renunciation which spiritual progress requires. We say to the Pharisees of your own days, who will ridicule these words, as Jesus said to the luxurious, proud and avaricious Pharisees of his own age: "You are very careful to appear just to men, but God knoweth your hearts; for what is great in the eyes of men is an abomination before God." What men regard as highly exalted are riches, glory, and pride, which they make their divinities; but the Lord loves the humble-minded, and the simple and gentle-hearted.

The words of Jesus (Matth. vi. 25, 26, 28-34; Luke xii. 22-24, 27-30) were clothed in Oriental imagery appropriate to the intelligence of the period. They were specially addressed to material and avaricious men, who were wholly pre-occupied with worldly advantages, and who saw nothing beyond, caring only to increase their own prosperity or fortune, tending their bodies like a precious plant, and neglecting their souls, the only good which they should have anxiously cared for. Jesus was obliged to speak strongly, to ensure their remembering anything of his words; and his teachings were always suited to the moral sores which he desired to heal.

In these words, Jesus reminds man of his origin; God, the Creator of all things, who watches over everything which he has created with equal care, and gives to each what it requires, according to its needs; material food to matter, and spiritual food to spirit. But man is always liable to overlook the real object of his teachings, and it is needful to point out that Jesus did not counsel reasonable

Digitized by Google

beings to wait in idleness till it pleases God to feed them as he feeds the fowls of the air, or to clothe them as he clothes the lilies of the field. It is enough for man to leave the Lord to provide what is necessary for his real advantage; but he ought to employ his faculties, activity, and energy to obtain his protection by work.

The lilies of the field rest in the bosom of the earth till the Lord weaves the robe which makes them the noblest of the flowers. Man must wait until the will of his God develops in him virtues which should make him illustrious in the eyes of his brethren; but he should await this in activity. God aids him who works; therefore you must not make the words of Jesus a pretext for fatalism or indifference.

(Matth. vi. 34.)—According to the spirit which quickeneth, what Jesus here condemns is excessive care for life, and not that which is necessary. Man must sustain his existence; his care for the future cannot and ought not to be less than that which some animals display; but at the same time he should not concentrate all his thoughts and desires on heaping up the goods of this world. He ought to possess foresight, but never be ambitious, and he should leave himself in the hands of the Lord, who knows what is good for every one, and who permits trial to purify the creature, to render it worthy of its Creator.

(Luke xii. 25, 26.)—The following is the real sense and meaning of this passage, in spirit and in truth:—Man should not even desire to alter the course of events which God has decreed, but should do all in his power to turn them to the glory of God, and to his own salvation. He should not endeavour to alter their nature; and above all, when they have been fulfilled, he ought not to say, "If I had done so-and-so, this would not have happened." Man should remember that whatever happens is due either to his position on the earth, and thus forms part of his necessary experiences, or results from his own weakness, which led to the fault, imprudence, or negligence which he laments. In either case he should acknowledge that God always

Digitized by Google

directs and overrules everything for the future good of the incarnate spirit.

(Matth. vi. 33.)—Man should strive above all things to live according to the will of the Lord; for when he has once entered on this path of purity, he will draw to himself the blessings of his heavenly Father, and will understand their real nature. These are not material blessings, concerning only that which is mortal in you, and which gives you most anxiety; but abundant blessings, which will aid your spirit to purify itself more and more, and lead it to understand that the pains and sufferings which affect the body are blessings from the Lord, because they purify your spirit, break the bonds which chain it to the earth, and permit it to ascend from your miserable existence towards the regions of eternal happiness.

When humanity shall have attained to the degree of moral purity which it ought to acquire, the questions relating to moral laws, as they are explained to you by the spirits of the Lord, concerning adoration, work, reproduction, conservation, destruction, society, progress, equality, liberty, justice, love, and charity, will be settled very easily; for material, moral and intellectual wealth will only belong to any particular individual in the sense that each lives for all, and all for each. The children of the Father will then form one great family, and unite the desire of mutually aiding one another with its effectual fulfilment; but these times are still far, very far off. Therefore do not seek to make premature changes in your manners and customs and laws, for such changes should only be the result of the change in your hearts which will bring with it, through the practice of mutual and fraternal aid, the development of your intelligence, by instruction, knowledge, and love; moral well-being, and consequently material prosperity.

Jesus said, "Sufficient unto each day is the evil thereof." As labourers of the soul, you drive the plough in barren soil. We prepare the seed, and are obliged to choose it carefully, for there are very few places in which it can germinate. Wait till the time of harvest has come, when the

Digitized by Google

Lord shall summon his industrious labourers. The trumpet will call them from the four corners of the earth, and the diligent labourers will rejoice at the sight of the numerous ears which they have sown in their furrows. Take courage, for the time will surely come.

Yes, Jesus has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Not a word which fell from his lips shall remain unfulfilled; but time has no limits in the eyes of the Lord. For yourselves also it has none; and when you have passed the barrier which hems you in, and have left your temporary sojourn in matter, and returned to your true country, you will be able to follow the progress of humanity; touching the revelation of Christ with one hand, and its complete fulfilment with the other.

LUKE, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 19–31.

Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

(19) Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. (20) And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who was laid at his gate, full of sores. (21) And desiring to be fed with the bread crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, and the dogs also came and licked his sores. (22) And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died, and was buried. (23) And in Hades, he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (24) And he cried out and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. (25) But Abraham said, Child, remember that thou hast received thy good things in thy lifetime, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; and now he is comforted thus, and thou art tormented. (26) And besides all these things, there is a great gulf fixed between us and you, so that those who wish to cross over to you cannot, nor those who would cross thence to us. (27) And he said, I ask thee, therefore, father, to send him to my father's house; (28) For I have five brethren, that he may testify to them, lest they should also come to this place of torment. (29) Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. (30) And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if anybody went to them from the dead, they would repent. (31) And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

§ 96. The hard, rich man suffers the penalty of his faults

Digitized by Google

and may thus be said to be in hell, when buried;* while the unhappy man who has been patient and resigned is recompensed for his afflictions. Punishment must take its course, and it cannot be shortened, except by repentance. Whatever efforts a just man might make, he could not stay the justice of the Lord as long as the guilty man himself remains impenitent; and the rich man suffered, but he did not repent. His anxiety for his brothers was only that they might avoid his sufferings; but he did not repent. His request was a demand, and not a sign of repentance. Although Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom, he was nevertheless a poor man, one of the common people, and the born servant of the rich man, even in "hell;" that is, in a state of punishment.

The dialogue is full of childlike simplicity, and was appropriate to the period and the intelligence of the age. Its imagery was designed to make a strong impression on those who heard it, but it is likewise addressed to you who consider your intelligence above such language.

Men, do not create a barrier between the poor man whom you repulse, and yourselves, for if he submits to your contempt with resignation, faith, and courage, he will be rewarded, while you will have to atone for your harshness and hardness of heart. As long as you persevere in your harshness, the abyss which separates you will be impassable to you both, and only repentance can bridge it over, and allow you to meet again.

What is the spiritual explanation of verses 27–31?

The language of the rich man in the parable (verses 27, 28 and 30) shows you that the Jews believed in the communication of men with the souls of the dead, or spirits; and sanctions this belief at the same time. Abraham's answers were designed to show that any communication from beyond the tomb is useless to those who are systematically incredulous. What would have been the effect of the apparition of the poor man upon the rich man's brothers, who shared his opinions and his selfishness, as the parable implies? They

*The French Testament reads: "The rich man died, and was buried in hell."—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

would have accused him of continuing to make himself troublesome, even after death; and they would have banished the apparition from their thoughts, as they would have driven the man from their sight; for it would have been still more annoying to them.

Besides systematic unbelief, the unbelief of callousness also leads man to deny communications from beyond the tomb, because they bring threatening revelations, and he would imagine himself in security; or because they insist on immediate reforms, and he desires to give way to his passions. Let such men first endeavour to apply the law to themselves, and conform to its teachings.

The Catholic Church says, "You have the Gospel and the Church; why seek further?"

Those who speak thus parody the words of Jesus (verses 29 and 31 of the parable); but when Jesus put the words, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them," into the mouth of Abraham, he implied, "You have the law and the prophets; you have the universal love to guard you; and you have the example of those who have practised it to guide you."

Those who refer you to the Gospels have made them a dead letter. It is no longer the law, for their own practice does not manifest the vast love which embraces all indiscriminately, which rejects no one, encourages all the weak, and seeks to recall all the wandering sheep without inquiring by what path they return to the fold. The law and the Gospels correspond to love, and the prophets and their interpreters correspond to the practice of love. Those who depart from it do not themselves follow the law which they desire to impose on others. It is because those who refer you to the Gospels have made it a dead letter that the Lord has sent the Spirit of Truth at the time foretold, when the abomination of desolation is standing in the holy place, where it ought not; that he may recall men by a general diffusion of the Spirit to the purity and simplicity of the sublime morality of the Master, and to the practice of universal love; and lead them to truth, for progress is a law of nature.

Digitized by Google

Those who take the parable literally say, "Its whole idea is contained in verse 15: 'For that which is great among men is an abomination in the eyes of the Lord.' In fact, the rich man is in hell only because he was great in the world, and the poor man is well-pleasing to God—he is 'in Abraham's bosom,' only because he was insignificant in the world." It is not said that the rich man had misused his wealth, nor that the poor man had made a good use of his poverty; but the rich man had had his good things during his life, and Lazarus had had nothing but evil. The same thing is implied in the words recorded by Luke (vi. 24, 25) in the commencement of the Sermon on the Mount: "But woe unto you, rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe unto you who are full now, for you shall hunger; Woe unto you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep."

This feeling of bitterness against riches and reprobation of the rich man arose in Christianity simultaneously with its struggle against the world; but the very thought of the Founder is different: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matth. vi. 33).*

Those who speak thus, even if they are partially justified by the false human interpretations which have been given to the Master's words, wholly misunderstand the spiritual sense and object of the thought of Jesus, which was purposely veiled by the letter, as well as of the parable itself; and of the texts quoted, which we have already explained. This false interpretation bore good fruit in its own time, for its very violence led dishonest, avaricious, and selfish men to abandon their wealth to escape the threatened chastisement; and thus to set examples of self-renunciation which would be better understood at a later period.

When you wish to fell a tree, you do not set to work with a lancet, but wield an axe with the full strength of your arm; and in order to destroy deeply-rooted and evil passions, you cannot use soft words, with nothing to back them, but must use strong language, to which the heart will respond. The words of Jesus were always chosen so that they might bear fruit immediately, and likewise prepare for a future harvest. Even what you regard as errors sprang from false interpretations, were only deep furrows ploughed into the hard soil, and forcing it to yield sweeter and more delicate fruits, when the tillage should finally have softened, improved, and made it fertile.

* This paragraph seems rather out of place, and perhaps belongs to the body of the work, but I have left it in small type, as it stands in the original.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

Let those who make such objections consider the spiritual explanation of this parable, and comprehend that the words of Jesus are "spirit and life" linked together in an harmonious whole, and then they will understand.

What is the spiritual meaning of verse 26?

It alludes to the impossibility of any spirit staying the course of divine justice.

The expressions in verse 26 are veiled by the imagery and the letter. Do they imply that good spirits cannot approach evil ones as long as the latter remain impenitent, and that guilty spirits cannot ascend to regions inhabited by good spirits?

No; the superior spirits cannot come in contact with inferior spirits undergoing punishment; but good spirits of a lower degree are around them, though invisible. On the other hand, inferior spirits can never ascend towards regions inhabited by good spirits, unless sincere repentance enables them to feel the influence of their protector, and unless they have been authorized to follow the good spirits for their own instruction and progress.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 1–6. MARK, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 24. LUKE VI.—VERSES 37, 38, 41, 42.

Do not Judge others—The Mote and the Beam—Do not throw Holy Things to Dogs.

Matth. vii. (1) Judge not, that ye be not judged. (2) For by what judgment ye judge, you will be judged, and by what measure ye mete, it will be measured to you again. (3) And why beholdest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, and dost not perceive the beam in thine own eye? (4) Or how shouldst thou say to thy brother, Let me pull the mote out of thine eye, and behold the beam is in thine own eye. (5) Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull the mote out of thy brother's eye. (6) Do not give that which is holy to the dogs, nor throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Mark iv. (24) And he said unto them, Take heed what you hear, for with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you, and to you shall more be given.

Luke vi. (37) And judge not, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you shall be forgiven. (38) Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall they give

Digitized by Google

into your bosom. (41) And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and dost not perceive the beam that is in thine own eye? (42) Or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull the mote out of thine eye, and dost not see the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull the mote out of thy brother's eye.

§ 97. The lesson contained in these words of Jesus, and others like them, is easily understood, and there is no necessity for a very elaborate commentary. Let man reflect and examine his own conscience before judging his brethren; let him take a clear estimate of his own character, and ask himself what he would answer if he were summoned before the Judge; and his own unworthiness will show him the indulgence which he ought to feel towards his brethren. Let him reflect on and practise the words, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

(Mark iv. 24.)—When Jesus spoke thus to his disciples, and through them to all men, he desired them to judge discreetly, and not too lightly. If an ignorant man passes judgment on his brother, he will always do so with severity, because he does not understand the reason of his actions, and is incapable of estimating them aright. Consequently he who judges severely will be judged in like manner.

The words, "to you shall more be given," signify that the more efforts you make to approach the Master, the more he will deign to stoop towards you. They have no connection with the preceding passage, and were not intended to imply that he who has judged his brethren severely will be more severely judged himself. You will be measured (judged) by the same standard with which you have judged your brethren, but you will also receive graces in proportion to the efforts which you have made to deserve them. This passage refers only to the graces which you may or may not deserve, according to whether you have made efforts to attain them, or have neglected to progress.

You should be charitable, and forgive your brethren their offences as you would wish your own to be forgiven. But if you do not pardon your brethren, or show them any consideration, how can you expect your Father in the heavens

Digitized by Google

to be indulgent towards you? Have you deserved it? Have you not broken his laws, and shown yourselves deficient in the love and charity which we are always preaching to you, and which is the only support on which you can rely? Pardon others, if you would be pardoned yourselves. Pass no judgments on your brethren, for you yourselves will also be judged by a righteous Judge, who reads your inmost hearts, and beholds all the miserable passions which move you. Do not judge your brethren, for you only see the surface, and although it may appear troubled to you, the depths may be pure before God; whereas, in your own case, it may be the depths of your heart which are impure.

(Matth. vii. 5.)—Begin by purifying your soul from all the vices and bad passions which prey upon it. Purify your hearts before God, and then only, when you yourselves are perfect, you may venture to find fault. You may do so then, but you will not, for the perfection of your souls will then lead you near to him who said, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone at her," and who, though himself sinless, said, "Go and sin no more."

(Matth. vii. 6.)—Try to penetrate into the true spiritual sense of these words of Jesus, as applied to the present and the future, in their relation to the teaching and propagation of the Gospel, and their application to the present period of the New Revelation. Your conduct should be regulated by surrounding circumstances, and by the company whom you address. Test it and prepare it, and however slight may be the sign of fertility which you may perceive in it, sow the seed with prudence and precaution, and cultivate it carefully, to further its development. But if the soil should appear dry and barren, keep silence, and let it be understood that you do not wish to speak. Such a refusal will excite curiosity, and curiosity will arouse in some natures the desire to know. In this case, devote yourself to the work, and instruct those who at first repulsed you, but who now desire to learn. Hold out your arms to the wandering sheep, come to the assistance of the lost,

Digitized by Google

and lead back to the Lord the little flock which you have assembled. The Master rewards his faithful servants bountifully, and the happiness of having rescued your brethren from incredulity, discouragement, and negation, will recompense you for your laborious life, and prepare you to enter into the joys of eternity.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 7–11.
LUKE, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 5–13.

Prayer.

Matth. vii. (7) Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (8) For every one who asks, receives; and he who seeketh, findeth; and to him who knocketh, it shall be opened. (9) Or what man is there among you, who, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? (10) And if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? (11) Then if you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in the heavens give good things to them that ask him?

Luke xi. (5) And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, give me three loaves; (6) For a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him. (7) And he shall answer from within, and say, Do not trouble me; the door is already shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you what you want. (8) I tell you, even if he will not get up and give him the (loaves) because he is his friend, yet on account of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. (9) And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (10) For every one who asketh, receiveth; and he who seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. (11) If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? And if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? (12) Or if he ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion? (13) If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

§ 98. By these words, Jesus sought to guard his disciples against the discouragement which is likely to be caused by apparent unsuccess. These sayings are applicable to all generations; perseverance may attain everything. Perseverance strengthens your resolutions, and adds to the perfection of your work; it confirms you in your faith, and thus renders you worthy of the attention of the Master, who will grant

Digitized by Google

to your repeated efforts what he would have deferred giving you, if you were not yet sure of yourselves.

Man should not attempt or undertake anything without having prayed to the Lord from the depths of his heart, and besought his aid.

The Lord is full of compassion; he knows what is fitting for his children, and always grants it abundantly. But his blind and ungrateful children rarely understand the secret designs of Providence. A father does not give his child a serpent when he asks for a fish. Your Father never refuses you necessary blessings; but how do you know what is needful for you? Are you yourselves able to judge of the food which will best agree with you? Are you able to judge of or to understand the character of the experiences which it is needful for you to undergo? Your Father knows it, and will grant you the food best suited to your constitution. The more light you receive, the better will you be able to understand these sayings. The great Father does not give a stone to him who asks for bread. Pray to your Father for the bread of life, and he will grant you abundant opportunities of acquiring it.

(Matth. vii. 7, 8.)—These sayings of Jesus, like all others, must be understood according to the Spirit which giveth life, and not according to the letter which killeth. Pray to the Lord that you may understand truth, and your prayer will be heard. Knock at the gates of eternity, and you will be admitted to the sanctuary. Pray to the Giver of all holy and divine favours with purity and love, and ask him to give you his light to illumine your brethren, and he himself will place the torch in your hands, and its rays will illumine the world.

Man cannot alter any portion of the divine decrees, but if you pray for strength and light, it will be given you to comprehend why you suffer, and you will be enabled to bear even the severest trials with patience and resignation, even with love.

If you can efface newly-committed faults by sincere repentance, you can, by prayer, and by the request that you

Digitized by Google

may not commit them again, obtain the support and encouragement which will be given you to sustain and direct you, and to enlighten you respecting the experiences which you have chosen, and the conduct requisite to pass through them as the Lord would desire you. But you must first render yourselves worthy of such aid, and thus render it possible for you to receive it.*

It is said, "Ask and it shall be given unto you;" but this does not mean that you can ask God to change your experiences, and violently to alter the course of events which he has decreed. It means that it will be given to you to understand the secret ends of his providence, and as it were, to enter into communion with his thought, and, to comprehend and accept the good which may result to you in eternity from the moral and physical sufferings which oppress you during your human existenee. Your free will may change the surface of the events of your existence, but the essential basis will always be the same.

The thousand obstacles which arise from your social life and from your civilization, which is still so barbarous from many points of view, are not reckoned among your experiences. They are trifles which are of no importance in the mass of trials which you have to undergo.

"Your Father in the heavens," said Jesus, "will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask for it."

The Lord never remains deaf to the voice of his children, when they pray to him with faith and confidence. The Father of the great family does not always grant the favour which is asked of him in the form in which it is sought, because, instead of its being good for man, it might redound to his confusion; but if any one prays to him with sincerity, he hearkens to him, and grants him the Holy Spirit; that is, the love of God, and the understanding of events, under spirit influence, by permitting his messengers to surround and to enlighten him. The man to whom the heavenly Father has given the Holy Spirit is he who under-

* Either by inspiration or communication.

Digitized by Google

stands the words of the Master, applies them to his own conduct, and never despairs of the love and justice of the Lord.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSE 12. LUKE, CHAP. VI.—VERSE 31.

Love and Charity.

Matth. vii. (12) Therefore all things whatsoever that ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets.

Luke vi. (31) And as you would that men should do unto you, do ye also the like to them.

§ 99. Love thy neighbour as thyself. Thy neighbour, whoever he may be, known or unknown, friend or enemy, is always thy brother, for he is the son of the same heavenly Father. Put yourself in his place, always and everywhere, and under all circumstances, in order to act towards him as you would that he should act towards you; and therefore never say nor do anything that you would not have him say or do to you. But say and do to him according to all that is just and good in the material, moral, and intellectual order, which you would desire him to say and do to you if you were in his place, by practising towards him material and moral charity, to the utmost extent of your power, means, and faculties, both in word and act, and in all ways, with your heart, purse, arm, or intelligence.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 13, 14.

The Narrow Gate.

(13) Enter through the narrow gate, for the gate is broad and the way wide that leadeth to destruction, and there are many who enter through this. (14) For narrow is the gate and confined the way that leadeth unto life, and there are few who find it.

§ 100. The narrow gate and difficult path indicate the efforts which the incarnate spirit must make in order to attain to eternal life. He must struggle to cleanse himself from his vices, and to arouse in himself the virtues which are opposed to the vices which he has resisted.

Those who find the narrow door and the confined path

Digitized by Google

are those only who practise work, love, and charity, and consequently humility, tolerance, disinterestedness, and devotion towards all, and thus pass successfully through their experiences by resisting the evil instincts and tendencies which they have to contend with, and which necessitate successive reincarnations for the purification and progress of the spirit.

The wide gate and broad way which lead to destruction, and through which so many enter, represent pride, selfishness, and ambition, with all their consequences; avarice, cupidity, envy, luxury, intemperance, anger, idleness, materialism, incredulity, intolerance, fanaticism, and the predominance of matter over spirit, or even the subservience of spirit to matter; in short, wickedness in general, both in word and act, under all shapes, and in all degrees of evil.

LUKE, CHAP. XIII. — VERSES 23–30.

Efforts to enter by the Narrow Gate.

(23) And a certain man said unto him, Lord, are there few who are saved? And he said to them, (24) Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for I say unto you that many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able.

§ 101. Many endeavour to follow the road which leads to the Father, but become weary of the obstacles which they have to overcome, the efforts which they must make, and the sacrifices which they must impose on themselves, and stop, refusing to go further. These cannot pass the narrow door; but the man who always follows the course which his conscience directs, never seeking to silence its behests by sophism, or even by delays, is he who will pass easily through the door, narrow as it appears. It will be wide enough when he approaches, for it will be opened to receive him.

We tell you, with Jesus, "Many will seek to enter, and will not be able." These are they who attempt it, but who do not persevere.

You can and ought, Spiritists, to apply these words to

Digitized by Google

yourselves. Many among you have seen the gate standing open, and have turned towards it, but with faltering steps, dragging with them a train of fraud, vices, and impurity; and they do not really advance. They believe they advance, but the road constantly lengthens before them, and the gate gradually closes.

Therefore, before entering on this barren, stony path, lay aside everything which might impede your course. You can only reach the door if guided by a pure conscience; and that alone is sure to find it open, and succeed in passing it.

(25) And when the master of the house hath risen, and has closed the door, and you begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; and he shall answer, and say unto you, I know not whence ye are.

§ 102. There is a limit to the long-suffering of the Lord. When the spirit who is required to progress on your earth remains obstinately stationary in his faults, as if he did not perceive the ascending path of progress stamped on all nature, he does not reach the goal at the same time as his brethren, and is consequently unable to enter with them into happier spheres. If the obstinacy and obduracy of the spirit resist all other methods, the Lord exiles him to the inferior planets, where he must recommence his wanderings until he recognises the necessity for progress.

(26) Then you will begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. (27) And he shall answer, I say unto you that I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye that work injustice.

§ 103. This applies to all who continue to live a life condemned by the divine law, under cover of the religion which they profess. It is not enough to bear any religious title; you must practise its morality. It is not enough to say, "Lord, Lord;" you must do the will of your Father in the heavens.

(28) There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves cast out.

§ 104. These words were appropriated by Jesus in their form to the men to whom he spoke, but they are not alle-

Digitized by Google

gorical. They refer to the moral sufferings and tortures, symbolized by weeping and gnashing of teeth, which will be experienced by the guilty and rebellious spirits who will be exiled to the inferior planets at the time of the purification of your planet and its humanity. When a spirit is thus exiled to the inferior planets, he is always aware of the reason of his condemnation. Do you punish your criminals before they are sentenced? Yes, when they know that they are condemned, they will know that their obduracy alone has caused their punishment. They will see the extent of their fall, and will be able to estimate the greatness of their loss; but the Master's word will permit them to hope, and the sight of the happy will awaken in them the desire to succeed. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth among them; but they will also have a goal in view, and will desire to reach it. The Lord never condemns any one without leaving a door open for hope.

In addressing himself to the Hebrews, Jesus spoke to incarnate spirits, some of whom would persist in guilt till the time of purification. It is not necessary to be among the savages of Oceania, or devoid of knowledge or intelligence, to be rejected, for to such the Lord will give time. But those will be rejected who are proud and materialistic; those who seek the destruction of the masses by leading them into evil courses; and those who knowingly preach a corrupt morality. Yes, among those who listened to Jesus are some who are living in your own age, and who are still advancing in knowledge and intelligence, but, unhappily for themselves, not in simplicity of heart. They believe they possess everything, and when the time comes, they will see the nakedness of their souls.

(29) And they shall come from the East and the West, and from the North and the South, and shall recline in the kingdom of God.

§ 105. This alludes to the community of thought and belief which will be established among all men at the time of the regeneration, and also to the spirits who will come to your purified earth from different planets, at the predicted time when Jesus, the Spirit of Truth, shall appear

Digitized by Google

among you; for the words of the Master are always designed both for the present and the future.

(30) And behold there are last who shall be first, and there are first who shall be last.

§ 106. Many of those who set out first will arrive last at the goal, from not having followed the path with perseverance. Those who trust in themselves and believe that they walk more surely, and surpass their brethren, will find themselves impeded by their pride, and proportionably retarded in their course. In the eyes of the Lord, the length of the existence of the spirit is nothing, but virtue and repentance are everything. Consequently, the spirit who has been slow to enter on the path of well-doing, but who has pressed on with perseverance and activity, may not only overtake, but pass by the indolent, if not guilty spirit, who makes no effort to advance, although he began his ascending course earlier.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 15–20. LUKE, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 43–45.

False prophets.—The Tree known by its Fruits.

Matth. vii. (15) But beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are rapacious wolves. (16) You shall know them by their fruits; do they gather grapes from thorns, or figs from burrs? (17) Thus every good tree bears good fruits, and the worthless tree bears bad fruits. (18) A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a worthless tree bear good fruit. (19) Every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down, and cast into the fire. (20) Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Luke vi. (43) For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a worthless tree bear good fruit. (44) For every tree is known by its own fruit, for figs are not gathered from thorns, nor do they gather a bunch of grapes from a bramble-bush. (45) The good man from the good treasure of his heart brings forth good, and the evil man from the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil; for from the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh.

§ 107. Let him who preaches with the lips begin to preach by example; everything is included in this. The labourer is known by his work. False prophets are those who preach a morality which they do not practise. He who does not exhibit to others the fruits of the morality

Digitized by Google

which he preaches is a bad tree. If you are a good tree, you should bear good fruits. Consequently, if all your actions are regulated by the morality of Christ, and are in harmony with his teachings, your fruits will be good ; but do not wander from them. Whatever may be your professions, if your actions do not correspond to them, you are bad trees destined to be cut down and cast into the fire ; that is, you will be doomed to expiation and re-incarnation, as we have already explained. Spiritists, preach to those whom you call false prophets by your own example, and display the fruits of the morality which you profess. The blind cannot perceive the glory of the light, but if you open their eyes they will see it.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 21–29. LUKE, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 46–49.

God judges Men by their Works.

Matth. vi. (21) Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in the heavens. (22) Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many mighty works? (23) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you ; depart from me, ye that work lawlessness. (24) Therefore whosoever heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, I will compare him to a prudent man, who built his house upon a rock. (25) And the rain descended and the rivers came, and the winds blew, and rushed upon that house, and it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock. (26) And whoever heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, may be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. (27) And the rain descended, and the rivers came, and the winds blew, and dashed against that house, and it fell, and its fall was very great. (28) And it came to pass that when Jesus had ended these sayings, the crowds were amazed at his doctrine ; (29) For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Luke vi. (46) And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not what I say? (47) Whosoever cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like. (48) He is like a man building a house, who dug and deepened, and laid the foundation on the rock ; and when the flood came, the river assailed that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded upon the rock. (49) And he who heareth, and doeth not, is like a man who built a house upon the ground, without a foundation, which the river assailed, and immediately it fell, and the downfall of that house was great.

Digitized by Google

§ 108. Not all those who say, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of God. Words perish and evaporate in space without reaching the ear of the Lord, when they are unaccompanied by acts. Be careful, therefore, always to practice what you preach, admire, or profess; for it is not enough to admire the law of Jesus, and to say that it is perfect, if you make no effort to follow it, and to perfect yourselves in it. It is not enough to call yourselves Christians if your actions are opposed to the will of Christ. It is not enough to call yourselves Spiritists if your conduct remains unchanged; nor is it of any avail to say, "We are mediums, and make use of our various medianimic faculties," if you do not practise the lessons which you have received, and do not endeavour with your whole heart to make these faculties useful in the cause of God, for the moral improvement of your brethren; or set them the example by your constant, energetic, and sustained efforts for your own personal improvement. You should employ these powers with humility and disinterestedness, for the sole end of seriously, usefully, and effectively propagating the law of Jesus, and the sublime doctrine of the Spirits of the Lord, who come to explain this law, by freeing the spirit from the letter; and to teach men to understand, love, and practise it, and thus prepare for the fulfilment of the promises of the Lord.

The practice of this law is necessary at the present day, especially for you, Spiritists. Let anyone who sets foot in this path, clearly understand that he cannot stop, and ought not to stray from it; for to him much has been given, and from him much will be expected. He has no excuse, for the truth is no longer concealed from him by the thick veil of ignorance. The light has penetrated it, and his cold indifference will no longer serve as an excuse. Charity has drawn near him to warm him, and if his heart remains hard, it is because he himself willed it.

Much will be required of the Spiritist. Let him then prepare at once to give an exact account of what has been entrusted to him.

Digitized by Google

As soon as the last words were written, the medium was placed spontaneously under a new influence, and wrote in a different hand as follows:—

It is not enough to say that a system of morality is sublime, if you do not attempt to practise it. It is not enough to be a Christian, or even a Christian Spiritist, if you do not practise the morality which I teach. Then let those who would enter into the kingdom of my Father show themselves his children, with the heart and not with the lips; and let them obey the instructions which they have received, and are still receiving from missionary spirits, according to my promises, with submission, zeal and confidence. These instructions are designed to teach all classes of men progressively, to lead them to truth, and to remind them of all that I have said unto them.

Let them say unto me, Lord, Lord; but from the bottom of their hearts, and let their actions correspond to their words; and the kingdom of the heavens shall be theirs.

In the name of Him whose protecting hand sustains the weak and humble, and humbles the proud and the powerful.

ELISABETH.

Then the writing again changed spontaneously, and the medium resumed the hand in which she had been writing before the last communication.

Bless the Lord for the favour that he has shown you, and ask him in your hearts to preserve to you the support of Him who has manifested to you to-day through his messenger. Persevere in the path on which you have entered, with faith and confidence, but above all, with earnest faith, and the Lord will extend his hand over you to remove the obstacles which might stop you.

JOHN, MATTHEW, LUKE.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 1-4. MARK, CHAP. I.—VERSES 40-45. LUKE, CHAP. V.—VERSES 12-16.

The Leper.

Matth. viii. (1) And when he came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him. (2) And behold a leper came and did obeisance

Digitized by Google

to him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. (3) And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. (4) And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man, but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses appointed, as a testimony unto them.

Mark i. (40) And a leper came to him, calling to him, and kneeling to him, and saying to him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. (41) And Jesus feeling compassion, stretched forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. (42) And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. (43) And he strictly charged him, and immediately sent him away. (44) And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man, but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses appointed, for a testimony unto them. (45) But he went out, and began to report many things, and to make the story known, so that Jesus could no more openly enter the city, but was without in desert places, and they came to him from all parts.

Luke v. (12) And it came to pass that when he was in one of the cities, behold a man full of leprosy, and seeing Jesus, fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. (13) And stretching forth his hand, he touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean; and immediately the leprosy departed from him. (14) And he charged him to tell no one; but go away and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing according to what Moses appointed, for a testimony unto them. (15) But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him, and large crowds flocked together to hear him, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. (16) And he withdrew himself into the deserts, and prayed.

§ 109. Jesus saw when men had faith, and rewarded it, but he also knew that the time had not yet come for the open proclamation of the mercies which he shed around him. It is the same at the present day. The Lord lends you his aid to cure the leprosy of your hearts; but all are not yet able to understand his mercy; hence we caution you to act with prudence. You may perceive from the indiscretion and disobedience of the leper that the benefits of the Lord cannot remain concealed.

Human magnetism is capable of effecting cures which you cannot yet understand; but the nearer man approaches spiritual life, the more he purifies himself, and thus brings himself into affinity with the magnetic fluids around him, the more he will control them, and be able to employ them for healing purposes. You do not yet know what man can accomplish by means of magnetism, and still less what he will be able to accomplish at a later period.

Digitized by Google

The instantaneous cure of the leper was only a natural event, due to the concentration of the fluids under the control of the powerful will of Jesus. These fluids penetrated his skin, and annihilated the impure substances which it contained, and which were not drawn into the system, and into the general circulation, for their inmost principle was destroyed by the purification of the bodily fluids; the tissue of the skin was instantaneously restored, and the sick man was healed. This is a "miracle" to human eyes, for it is a result that it would not yet be possible for man to obtain in his present state of moral impurity. When he will be capable of such an effort in accomplishing physical cures, his moral cure will also be effected, and your faith and submission will drive away the impure influences which prey upon your heart, and it will be clean in the sight of God.

We repeat that the more man purifies himself, the more will he be able to employ the magnetic fluids as healing agencies. The moral and physical purification of man will be effected by a slow and progressive revolution, and in a manner almost imperceptible to those who shall witness it; but the moral revolution should long precede the physical revolution.

What do your physicians do before attempting to purify the skin of a leper? They try to act upon the mass of the blood, and to free it from everything which corrupts it. We have a similar work to accomplish. Before your material organism can be improved, we must cleanse the source of your impurity. It is your body which keeps your soul captive, and the time will come when your soul will release itself, and raise your body into purified regions.

Jesus told the leper to show himself to the priest, and offer for his cleansing what Moses had appointed for a testimony unto them, so that he might return to ordinary life, since the lepers were driven away from their fellows. The priests had the right, if not the knowledge, to decide whether a man who had been afflicted with leprosy was cured, and might return to his friends.

Do not wonder that the leper could mix with the crowds

Digitized by Google

around Jesus to request and obtain his cure. Jesus wandered over the country, passing constantly from one place to another. You cannot compare your civil organization with that of so remote a period. The lepers were driven from the boundaries of the towns, but could not be forbidden the open country. They were separated from their friends, but were not shut up; and there were as yet no places of refuge for the miseries and sufferings of the poor.

With regard to the offering, you must remember that everything in the law of Moses was symbolical. Just as the first-born of the flock was sacrificed to consecrate the first-born of the family, and as the offering of propitiation was sacrificed to atone for the sins of the people, thus lepers were required to bring their offering to the Lord, as a pledge of their purification, and in gratitude for the mercy shown to them. The offering was not determined by law, and the leper offered what he could afford—either fruit, a bird, or a lamb; and he who offered most was then, as now, cleansed in the eyes of men. Does it not happen among you daily that the personal interest of a man biasses his judgment?

It is said that Jesus was no longer able to show himself openly in the town on account of the public promulgation of his cure by the leper, but that he was without, in desert places, and that people flocked to him from all parts. This was because the crowd, who were more curious about material miracles than about the kingdom of the heavens, thronged around and impeded him; and he needed space.

We have already explained the human expression, "He withdrew himself into the desert, and prayed." Whenever Jesus withdrew himself from the eyes of his disciples, they thought that he had retired to some secret place, to pass his time in prayer or fasting.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 5–13. LUKE, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 1–10.

The Centurion.

Matthew viii. (5) And when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, calling to him; (6) And saying, Lord, my servant was struck down in the house paralytic, suffering fearfully. (7) And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. (8) And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. (9) For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my slave, Do this, and he doeth it. (10) And when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to his followers, Verily I say unto yon, I have not found such great faith, no, not in Israel. (11) And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens. (12) But the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the further darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (13) And Jesus said to the centurion, Go thy way, and let it be to thee as thou hast believed. And his servant was healed in the same hour.

Luke vii. (1) And when he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered into Capernaum. (2) And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. (3) And when he heard of Jesus, he sent to him the elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. (4) And when they came to Jesus, they besought him earnestly, saying, that he is a worthy man for whom he should do this. (5) For he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue. (6) Then Jesus went with them; and when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof. (7) Therefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say the word, and my servant shall be healed. (8) For I also am a man set under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say to this, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my slave, Do this, and he doeth it. (9) And when Jesus heard these things he wondered at him, and turning to the crowd who were following him, he said, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. (10) And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant whole that had been sick.

§ 110. Have faith. God makes no difference between his creatures, whether they are gathered under one law or another. All earnest men are his children; go therefore to him with confidence, whatever may be the human burden which you bear. Go to him, and he will relieve you; show him your miseries and sufferings; call him to your aid, and he will heal you; let your faith be strong, and it will draw upon you the blessings of the Lord.

Digitized by Google

Jesus cured the centurion's servant by the magnetic principle; and all phenomena relative to material cures which are called "miraculous" or "miracles" spring from the same source. Paralysis arises from a congelation of the fluids which circulate in the human organism. The powerful will of Jesus altered these fluids by modifying and vivifying them afresh. Galvanism can give temporary movement to the nerves and muscles of a corpse; and when certain fluids which are diffused in the atmosphere are concentrated by magnetic action, they are capable of exerting a violent shock on the vital frame, which regenerates it. Men perceive a "miracle" in the power of him whose will alone was sufficient to produce these effects; but they may be explained by natural causes.

Just as the Lord has planted the earth beneath your feet with wholesome plants, of which you do not yet know all the healing properties, so also has he charged the atmosphere around you with strengthening, purifying, and regenerating properties, which you do not suspect, and which are still non-existent to you, for you cannot employ them with success until you have made the necessary studies. Moral studies alone can raise you to the height of knowledge which you wish to acquire, by delivering you from your brutal instincts. The purer man becomes, the greater mastery will he acquire over his will, his instincts, and his senses; and the nearer he approaches to perfection, the more will his power increase.

Nothing but the moral purification of man will make it possible for him to pursue the studies necessary to acquire a knowledge of the nature and properties of these magnetic fluids, and of the manner in which they must be employed for healing, according to the nature of diseases. The more the spirit frees itself from matter, the more its knowledge of subjects which are still obscure or unknown to man will extend and develop; but long before he is acquainted with the nature of the fluids, he will be able to use them with success, aided by the guardian spirits of humanity, who will be glad to prepare them for him by their secret

Digitized by Google

intervention, through spiritual magnetism, and, as it were, to place them in his hands, to be used as necessity requires.

The knowledge of these fluids will progress according to the moral state, and it will consequently not be complete until man shall have attained the degree of perfection which he may hope to acquire on earth.

Human magnetism must progress for a long time before attaining its perfection, when the power of the will of the spirit will be sufficient to combine or to disperse the fluids which man desires to act upon.

But the knowledge already acquired has effected some good, and has prepared the way for vast benefits, by enabling you at once to perceive hidden treasures, notwithstanding all obstacles, and to dive even into the bosom of the earth to obtain them. We do not speak here of riches, which man should despise as the instruments and means of pride, selfishness, and sensuality; but of those treasures which God has given him to restore his impaired health and strength.

We allude to the lucid somnambulism which has been produced and revealed by human magnetism; to the faculties of spiritual sight, and the instincts which the somnambulist acquires by disengagement under magnetic influence, and to the valuable remedies which his lucidity can and ought to procure for humanity from the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms. It can also pierce into the bosom of the earth, and perceive the deposits or products which are buried there.

Till the moral and physical purification of man has been accomplished, human magnetic action alone will rarely suffice for the cure of diseases. In most cases which are essentially physical or organic, it must be assisted and combined either with your human medical science, or with magnetic somnambulism, and the use of mineral, vegetable, and animal substances, with the healing properties of which you are either already acquainted, or which remained to be discovered.

You must know that additional remedies may be employed

Digitized by Google

in conjunction with the magnetic fluids, with good results. There is a sympathy between plants possessed of healing properties, and the fluids which they absorb. The plants become saturated with these fluids, and convey them into the organism. If you employ them in conjunction with human magnetism, their effects will be greatly increased; and it is on this account that lucid somnambulists, freed from all external influence by magnetic disengagement, are very skilful in selecting medicinal plants. You should not reject any means of cure which the Lord has put into your hands. Medicine should not be regarded as a system, but rather as a method of restoring equilibrium to the organism when it is disturbed; and all who desire to work for the physical restoration of humanity should devote themselves to profound and persevering studies, both theoretical and experimental, and should avail themselves either of human medical science, which has advanced far already, and is continually advancing; or of human magnetism; or of magnetic somnambulism, and should have recourse to all the means and resources which their studies may indicate. These may be derived both from the healing properties of mineral, vegetable and animal substances (especially vegetable), and also from the fluids with which the atmosphere around you is charged.

Although human magnetism alone will rarely suffice for the cure of purely physical disorders at present, yet you will find exceptional cases in which God will permit a man to precede his brethren. When a man is thus privileged on account of the elevation and purity which he has acquired, he will be aided secretly by superior spirits, and will accomplish cures which you look upon as impossible, by the power of his will, and by magnetic action. Such are the cures which have been termed "miracles."

§ 111. What will be the destiny of the various existing systems of medicine?

All medical systems should be combined into one only, and allied with human magnetism, and magnetic somnambulism, that their combination may lead to mutual aid, and

Digitized by Google

become the arsenal whence man may draw weapons to contend with disease, and to renew the health of his brethren.

Every system falls within the limits of the laws of nature; including the principle of contraries and of similars; human magnetism, and magnetic somnambulism.

It is the duty of man to employ study and experience to teach him to discern what cases require such and such remedies, that he may be enabled to restore equilibrium to the organism when it is interrupted, and to re-establish the harmony of the vital forces when it is impaired.

Man should seek for the source of the evil, and more especially try to discover the moral source of all physical and organic sufferings. A man cannot blame secret sorrows or evil tendencies if he breaks his arm; but if you search the depths of the heart and conscience in the numerous evils which afflict humanity, you will see the root of the tree which spreads over all the members. The heart or soul is nearly always affected, and this results in disturbance of the nervous system, which is the source of all diseases and infirmities. If you inquire into the antecedents of the sufferer, you will often find that secret remorse or sorrow has impaired the health by vitiating the blood, which ought to be pure when it circulates in the veins.

Physicians (we speak to all who devote themselves to the relief of their brethren), be clear-sighted, and do not be as unskilful in applying a remedy to the sores of your patients, as the child who ties a bandage round a doll, supposing it to be a human being.

§ 112. What is the meaning of Matthew viii. 11—"Many shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens?" Please to explain the application of this passage, both as spoken by Jesus to his disciples, and as regards the present era of Spiritism in connection with v. 10 and Luke vii. 9—"Verily I say unto you, that I have not found such great faith, no, not in Israel."

It was a lesson designed to teach the Jews to abandon the idea that they alone were the children of God, and that they alone could expect his blessings. Jesus taught them that, no matter who a man was, or whence he came, he was

Digitized by Google

truly the son of God, if he had faith; but that those who regarded themselves as entitled to special privileges because they belonged to the great Jewish race, would be rejected if they did not follow the path traced out by the Lord, and which Moses showed them when he called upon them to love God, and to love their neighbour as themselves.

You may apply this lesson to the Roman or any other Church which asserts that those who do not conform to her authority or doctrines are not only cast out of her communion, but rejected by God. She is proud of the wealth which has been conferred upon her, and will not admit that she should share it with others, but drives away the little dog which seeks to feed on the crumbs which have fallen from her table, without reflecting that he who has raised her up may also cast her down.

We allude here to the words of the Canaanitish woman whom Jesus led to answer him in words which should instruct both the present and the future: "Does not the little dog eat the crumbs which have fallen from his master's table?"

The Church was founded to continue the work of the first Christians, and she began with zeal, self-renunciation, and courage; but success made her torpid, and she grew accustomed to honour and greatness. She, who should have set an example to the children of the Lord, has sacrificed to Mammon. She has forgotten the humility of her Head, who instituted the Gospel law which she is called upon to teach; and in her pride she repulses those who seek to open her eyes. The bandage which she has bound over them is thick and hard to tear; but take courage, Spiritists, for it is the will of God that you shall succeed. The work will not be accomplished in a day, for each year of the centuries which have passed has added its own layer of obscurity. Consequently, the scales which conceal the light must be stripped off layer by layer.

The Lord sends his spirits, or angels, to aid you in this task. They will point out to you the means; but you must be docile, and above all prudent, for if you are too hasty,

Digitized by Google

you will retard the recovery. Physicians, you have an important cure to effect, and therefore you must consult and work together, and restore the brightness of day to the Church, who would fain spread light around her, but who languishes in the darkness that she herself has made.*

The Lord created her pure, and he will purify everything in her which is corrupt. The temple of Christ is your planet; all men who practise his sublime and simple morality are its members, and its priests are all those pure hearts who strive to lead wandering spirits back to the Great Shepherd.

§ 113. Please to explain Matthew viii. 12—"But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Those who have received the word of God, and have not made such good use of it as they ought to have done, will be rejected, and will then clearly perceive the error into which they have fallen. How many such there have been, and still are, who are groaning over their faults, but who believed themselves saved simply because they believed that they had a right to absolve or to condemn, and have been weighed in the same balances in which they weighed others.

You know that the expressions "weeping and gnashing of teeth" are allegorical, and refer to the moral sufferings of the guilty spirit in the errant state. These sufferings are proportioned to his offences, and are inflicted on him solely for his moral improvement and progress. All references to future suffering refer exclusively to the moral sufferings of the guilty and repentant spirit, which are always and inevitably followed by re-incarnation.

LUKE, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 11–17.

The Widow's Son.

(11) And it came to pass the day after that he went into the city called Nain, and many of his disciples went with him, and a large crowd. (12) And when he approached the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she

* These words were medianimically dictated in May, 1862.

Digitized by Google

was a widow, and there was a considerable crowd from the city with her. (13) And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said, Do not weep. (14) And he came and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still; and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. (15) And the dead man sat up, and began to speak; and he delivered him to his mother. (16) And fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet has arisen among us; and the Lord hath looked upon his people. (17) And this report of him went forth throughout all Judæa, and into all the surrounding country.

§ 114. You know the connection which subsists between the spirit and the body when the latter is separated from its animating intelligence by sleep, swooning, or catalepsy. The spirit recovers a temporary and restricted liberty, but is connected with the body which it has left by an electric cord, which is the fluidic link of the perisprit, and which recalls it as soon as the necessities of human life require.

There is no material waking when actual death has taken place, and the immutable will of the Lord never forces the spirit to unite with corruption. As soon as the link between the spirit and body is broken, the matter begins to decay, even when it appears to human eyes that the organic life is not yet extinct. These effects exist, although your science is not yet able to demonstrate their symptoms and results.

In such cases as that of the widow's son, the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus, the link connecting the spirit and the body had not yet been severed. The bystanders supposed that they were really dead; but their death was only apparent. Jesus recalled the prisoner who had quitted his fleshly abode, and he immediately obeyed and returned. All such events, both in the Old and New Testament are to be explained in a similar manner.*

The widow's son returned submissively to his prison of flesh. The spirits whose concurrence was necessary in any of the works which Jesus was about to accomplish, and which were to be recorded in the Gospels for the instruction of mankind, were placed by their own desire, and under the circumstances required in the path of Jesus, when they accepted their mission, and were incarnated. Among these were the various

* See an article by the Translator (written before reading the present commentary) in the *Truthseeker* for 1875, vol. xiii. pp. 200, 201, 290.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

persons whom "he raised from the dead," who were all submissive and devoted to his will.

The widow's son was in a completely cataleptic state. Total catalepsy is the only kind of insensibility which could present all the appearances of death for so long a time as to be taken for real. The Hebrews were not accustomed to use coffins, and Jesus touched the body in order to stop the procession. His powerful will, expressed in the words, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise," recalled the spirit. The body immediately awoke from its long sleep, and recovered strength and reason as soon as the spirit was recalled, by the beneficent magnetic influence which emanated from the Master.

The spirit of the widow's son was ready to return to his body at the command of Jesus; but the vitality of the body had become greatly impaired through the absence of the spirit, and the increasing weakness of the fluidic link. It therefore needed the magnetic power of the Master to restore its strength and vitality immediately, by re-establishing the harmony of the vital forces.

No man in whom the spirit and perisprit have been completely separated from the body by real death, or the rupture of the fluidic link, can ever recover his corporeal human life by the spirit and perisprit returning to the corpse. When the spirit is thus released from the body, it returns to its former spiritual life, and can only return to corporeal human life through reincarnation, according to the laws of your world.

The immutable will of God would never compel the spirit to unite itself to the corruptible corpse which it has left. He never departs from the natural laws regulating spiritual action on your world and on all others. In all cases in which persons are said to have been "raised from the dead," whether in the Old or New Testament, you must understand that the spirit returned to the body, which it had not entirely abandoned. In all such cases it still remained connected with the body by the fluidic link of the perisprit, and actual death had not taken place. The supposed death was only apparent, and was the consequence of complete catalepsy, though it appeared to be real to human eyes.

Digitized by Google

The funeral procession of the widow's son was proceeding silently on its way when Jesus stopped it, and said to the mother, as he said to those who were weeping and lamenting in the house of Jairus, "Do not weep." When the procession halted, he said, "Young man, Arise," as he said to the daughter of Jairus, "Young girl, Arise!" After this, he withdrew.

None of the followers, or any of those who formed part of the procession, said a single word to Jesus in the presence of his disciples. No one said that the widow's son was dead, and it was therefore unnecessary for Jesus to give any explanation, which might be understood in future times, of the spiritual import of the event which had just taken place. Those who witnessed or heard of the event regarded it as a miracle, and they were intentionally permitted by the silence of Jesus to put their own interpretations upon it. It conduced to the acceptance of his mission, and to great results then and afterwards; and it was left to be explained by the present revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which Jesus foretold and promised.

Those who accompanied the procession, the disciples, the crowd which followed them, and those who heard of the event, all believed in the actual death and resurrection of the widow's son. They regarded him as dead, and as having been recalled to life by Jesus, in the literal sense which their ignorance, prejudices, and traditions led them to attach to the words.

But this belief resulted solely from human opinions and impressions; for Jesus said nothing about the real state of the young man. The Evangelists who recorded the fact, related the words and actions of Jesus, and also the human opinions, impressions, and interpretations relating to the event, which they themselves shared. Thus they recorded it in a manner which all could understand, and spoke of the widow's son as "a dead man" (v. 12), and "he who was dead" (v. 15).

The answer to the question as to whether the young man was actually dead or not, was left to human interpretations, until your own times. The present revelation explains the real state of him whom men regarded as dead, and the real

Digitized by Google

nature of the act performed by Jesus. The progress of human science, the study and observation of magnetism and magnetic somnambulism, and the guiding torch of spiritual science, enable you to understand the explanation.

We shall give you further explanations at the proper time respecting the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus; but will make a few preliminary remarks here. In the case of the daughter of Jairus, the servants who came to meet the chief of the synagogue said to him in the presence of Jesus, his disciples, and the crowd, "Your daughter is dead; trouble not the Master." But when Jesus came to the house of Jairus, he said to those who wept and lamented, "Weep not;" and to the flute-players, and the crowd of people who were making a noise, "Withdraw, for the young girl is not dead, but sleepeth." Those present received his words with ridicule, "knowing," say the historians, "that she was dead." And yet this opinion of the ignorant crowd has prevailed over the express declaration of the Master to the contrary! The disciples saw only a "miracle" in the act of Jesus, since they were unable either to explain or to comprehend it; and their opinion lasted for centuries; in fact, until your own times, when incredulity has attacked this opinion in its turn, and has rejected the fact, because it cannot explain it, and does not believe in the "miracle." The Church still teaches the "death" and "resurrection" of the daughter of Jairus in the literal sense which men attach to the words, by the return of the spirit to the corpse.

But it was necessary that these opinions should be held for a time, for they have contributed to the advancement of humanity. Jesus knew the state of intelligence and the necessities and aspirations of the period, and knew that this human opinion would prevail. He therefore provided for the future by saying, "The young girl is not dead, but sleepeth," and left the full explanation of the event, which was regarded as a miracle, till the time of the present revelation.

In the case of Lazarus, the language of Jesus was appropriate to the situation. He expressed himself in such a manner that his words were useful at the time, and prepara-

Digitized by Google

tory for the future; and he left it to the present revelation to give you the full spiritual explanation of the event.

Jesus said, as in the case of the daughter of Jairus, "This illness is not unto death; our friend Lazareth sleepeth, and I am going to awake him out of his sleep." He only said, "Lazarus is dead," in reply to the observation of his disciples, "If he sleepeth, he shall do well."

Lazarus was dead to the eyes of men, and all regarded him as dead, except Jesus. Jesus said that he was asleep, and that he would awaken him; he did not say that he would resuscitate him in the strict sense, by the return of the spirit to the corpse which it had left. The sickness of Lazarus was not unto death; and consequently death had not taken place.

We will defer for the present the full explanation of the words, "Lazarus is dead," and the cause of the human opinion of Martha, who believed, like others, that Lazarus was dead, and that his corpse was already beginning to decompose, because he had been dead four days.

During the earthly mission of Jesus, he arranged everything in the manner which would be most useful for the present, as well as for the future. At the same time, he prepared the foundation, elements, and means of the future explanations of his actions and words, in spirit and in truth, in such a manner that each age and period received as much truth as it was able to assimilate.

In reading the Gospels, you must be careful never to confound the words and actions of the Master with the human opinions, inferences, and interpretations which belong to the age when they were written, and the surroundings amid which Jesus accomplished his earthly mission. Never take the words of the Master literally, when they contradict each other, in trying to estimate the real character of his actions, or to ascertain the real idea underlying his expressions. In such cases, interpret his words in the spiritual sense, and take them as they should be understood, without separating them from each other, so that, when they are taken in their entirety, they shall form an harmonious whole.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 14–17. MARK, CHAP. I.—VERSES 29–34. LUKE, CHAP. IV. VERSES 38–41.

Cure of Peter's Mother-in-Law.—Healing the Sick.

Matth. viii. (14) And Jesus, coming into the house of Peter, saw his mother-in-law lying down sick of a fever. (15) And he touched her hand and the fever left her, and she rose up, and ministered to them. (16) And in the evening, they brought many demoniacs to him, and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick. (17) That the word spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, He has taken our infirmities and carried away our diseases.

Mark i. (29) And immediately on leaving the synagogue, he went into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. (30) And the mother-in-law of Simon was ill of a fever, and immediately they tell him about her. (31) And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. (32) And in the evening, when the sun set, they brought to him all those who were sick and those who were possessed with demons. (33) And the whole city was gathered together before the door. (34) And he healed many who were ill with all sorts of diseases, and cast out many demons, and did not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

Luke iv. (38) And he rose and left the synagogue, and went out into the house of Simon, and Simon's mother-in-law was laid up with a very great fever, and they besought him for her. (39) And standing over her, he rebuked the fever, and it left her, and forthwith she arose and ministered unto them. (40) And when the sun was setting, all that had any sick with various diseases, brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. (41) And demons came forth from many, crying out, and saying, Thou art the Christ, the Son of God. And he rebuked them, and did not permit them to speak, for they knew that he was the Christ.

§ 115. There were always physical diseases and infirmities to be healed, and subjugations, both corporeal and corporeal and moral, to be terminated. The means employed to cure diseases and to release the subjugated always served for the instruction of unbelievers.

Magnetic action was the agency which cured Peter's mother-in-law, as well as the other sick persons who were brought to Jesus at sunset. Jesus took the sick woman's hand, and his will gave this magnetic contact sufficient power to dispel the disease. You are not to suppose that Jesus employed different fluids specially appropriated to each disease which he cured. The fluids are nearly similar, and

Digitized by Google

the two principal classes are purifying and regenerating fluids, suited to act on the vital system when it has become diseased; and strengthening fluids, fitted to restore the mechanical action to the muscles and nerves. Jesus always applied the necessary remedy to every case.

But you must not think that a magnetizer cannot act safely in attempting cures, in proportion to his elevation, purity, and magnetic faculties, when he has faith, and desires to do good, although he is unacquainted with the purifying or strengthening effects of the fluids which he employs. He condenses the fluids by his own vital force; but he never works alone. The guardian spirits of humanity who assist him select the fluids, and dispose them so as to produce the desired effect, so far as it is permitted. They carry out his good intentions according to the designs of the Master.

With regard to the moral cures which Jesus effected on those who were subjugated, we have already explained (§ 74) that he drove away the evil spirits by his superior power, which inferior spirits were unable to resist when he wished to employ it.

Jesus did not permit the evil spirits to say that they knew him to be the Christ, for everything must come in due time. If he had been recognized earlier, the persecution of the Scribes, Pharisees, and authorities of the Church, would have begun sooner. You must not forget that the Master had the foreknowledge of events of which the evil spirits were ignorant, and he gave them orders in accordance with the object which he wished to attain.

Jesus did not display himself to the evil spirits clothed in the glory of the Holy One of God, the Lord and Master of your planet and its humanity. He simply showed them his spirit (compare § 14), but the mere force of his will was enough to cause them to recognize his power. When the evil spirits who departed from those whom they had subjugated, rendered them speaking mediums, and caused them to exclaim "Thou art the Son of God," they recognized in Jesus the signs of a superior spirit, and the superior spirits are, like all others, the children of the Almighty, and the

Digitized by Google

sons of the Most High. When they recognized Jesus to be the Son of God, they did not imply more than Jesus himself, with regard to men, when he called them "my brethren," and taught them to address the Lord God as "Our Father."

Those who attach special importance to this expression as applied to Jesus, know how slight their argument is. They dare only appeal to it with hesitation, and not one of them believes in his heart the doctrine which he lays down as an article of faith.

The apparent human life of Jesus, and his earthly mission, which was devoted to teaching and example, were the fulfilment of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "He has taken our infirmities, and has carried away our diseases." He descended among men to teach them to suffer in view of their regeneration; he cured the evils which he met with on his path, and, by way of teaching and example, he appeared to men to endure those which were heaped upon himself.

MARK, CHAP. I.—VERSES 35–39. LUKE, CHAP. IV. VERSES 42–44.

Jesus in the Desert.

Mark i. (35) And rising up very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he went out and came to a desert place, and there prayed. (36) And Simon and those with him followed him closely. (37) And when they had found him, they say unto him, All are seeking for thee. (38) And he saith unto them, Let us go into the adjoining villages, that I may preach there also, for I came out for this. (39) And he was preaching and casting out demons in their synagogues throughout all Galilee.

Luke iv. (42) And when it was day, he went out and journeyed into a desert place, and the crowds sought for him, and came to him, and detained him, that he should not depart from them. (43) And he said unto them, I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities, for I was sent for this. (44) And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

§ 116. You must always remember that the human narratives of the Evangelists, although written under medianimic influence and inspiration, reflect the opinions held by the Apostles, the disciples, and the multitude respecting the humanity of Jesus. Jesus was not subjected to the material necessities of humanity, but merely appeared to human eyes to

Digitized by Google

be so. There was no occasion for him to rest at night, but his followers believed that he rose up very early; and his activity was a lesson to them not to waste time in repose or personal indulgence. Whenever Jesus withdrew from the eyes of men, he disappeared, and retired to the superior regions; but his followers thought that he had retired into the desert to watch and pray; and this taught them that they should always be ready to appear before the Lord. In the present instance, Jesus retired to the superior regions during the night, but reappeared, and was seen going out very early in the morning, that his disciples and the multitude might know in what direction to follow to rejoin him. When Simon and his companions found him, he had already resumed his apparently human perispritic body.

The words which he addressed to the multitude when they wished to detain him, likewise contain a lesson for all the Apostles of the Gospel, and of the New Revelation. They teach them that they should never allow themselves to be detained anywhere after their task is completed, for their apostolical mission belongs to all their brethren.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 18–22. LUKE, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 57–62.

The Disciples of Jesus.

Matth. viii. (18) And Jesus seeing large crowds around him, gave command to depart to the other side. (19) And one of the scribes came to him, and said, Teacher, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. (20) And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head. (21) And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. (22) And Jesus said to him, Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.

Luke ix. (57) And it came to pass that while they were going along the road, a certain man said to him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. (58) And Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes and the birds of heaven have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. (59) And he said to another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. (60) And Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their own dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. (61) And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee, but suffer me first to take leave of those in my house. (62) And Jesus said to him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Digitized by Google

§ 117. In thus speaking, Jesus certainly did not teach men that they could not walk in his ways, and preach the kingdom of God (that is, show others the path of eternal life), without renouncing the necessities of human existence. He did not forbid men food or drink, or command them to absent themselves when duty called them to pay the last honours to one who was bound to them by love or friendship. He calls on no one to break or renounce his family ties, or to omit or neglect his duties.

Man should seek for the spirit; but he often runs blindly against the letter. Those who comment on the words of Jesus have erred in admitting symbol or Oriental hyperbole in some cases and not in others. They have falsified or modified his ideas, according to the age, and have thus made his words teach enormities at which man himself should blush.

Always seek for the spirit veiled under the letter in the words of Jesus. You will always find them to contain a lesson of vast justice, love, devotion, and charity, and a light beaming ever more clearly on the path of progress. You will thus learn to understand all his sayings in spirit and in truth, according to the Spirit which quickeneth, and not according to the letter which killeth. The general design of the verses at the head of this section was to teach men to fulfil the duties imposed on them by the Master, before all things. Every word of Jesus might receive a separate explanation, for each includes some lesson or precept.

His reply to the scribe teaches men how little importance they ought to attach to the comforts of human life when they desire to follow the Master, and walk in his steps. Man should not resign himself to ease and repose. The motive powers of life are activity, energy, and confidence. Jesus taught men to renounce all things, and never to permit their private interests to receive an undue proportion of their attention.

When another disciple asked leave to go and bury his father, Jesus replied, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." But he did not say, "Cast the mortal remains of those whom you

Digitized by Google

have loved, and who were bound to you by love and friendship, to the dogs and vultures." Do you throw away the clothes which they wore, or the objects which they prized? Surely not.

Do not treat dead bodies worse than the trifles which remind you of those whom you have loved. Do not let them be profaned, for the spirit has been there, although it has departed. Bury your dead, lest their exhalations should corrupt the air; but do not turn the funeral into an act of superstition, or, still worse, an occasion of ostentation. How many think more of a grand funeral than of the memory of those whose bodies are carried along with so much pomp! Ah! let the dead bury their dead, but while you pay the covering the attention due to an object which the deceased has loved, love him who has left this dead body with perfect affection. Let your loving thoughts be given to him, and let your ceremonies consist of heartfelt prayers. Do not let your affection cool towards him who has left his body, as his affection has cooled towards the body itself. Go to your cemeteries, and there follow the descending progress of affection and remembrance. See the fresh flowers fading gradually until no trace of them is left, and behold the moss and parasites wearing away the rock, as the worm devours the corpse. You will then understand that it is not material death which attracts men. What is the dead body of man? A mass of matter which the worms destroy; a portion of the universal Whole which must be decomposed and recombined with it. Do not therefore attach a childish importance to these remains which belong to the earth. The spirit alone which animated the body does not perish; it alone sees, feels, loves, and suffers.

The *dead* of whom Jesus spoke are those who live only for the body, and not by or for the spirit. To these the body is everything, and the spirit is nothing. They have ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to understand; and yet they neither hear, see, nor understand, for they are unable to do either. Leave those who are thus dead to the spirit to themselves. They live for the body, and have no other consolation; let them make the most of this corruptible

Digitized by Google

mass; but go you, and preach eternal life. Console, support, and exhort men, and lead them into the way of life, where all is light and perfume.

When Jesus said, "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God," he spoke to the disciple who asked permission to take leave of those who were at his house, before following him. Let not man, in seeking for the spirit, stumble against the letter. Many have accused Jesus of thus teaching heartlessness and the rupture of family ties, but how far was such a thought from his idea! Do you suppose that Jesus, who was all love and devotion, would have taught egotism? He said to men, "Do not look behind when you have entered on the right road, for you will always find some bond behind you to draw you back." Reflect well before setting out, and putting the plough into the furrow; but as soon as you have done so, and know that it is turning up the soil where the good seed should fall, do not stop again, but march forwards.

As soon as these words were written, the medium was placed spontaneously under a new medianimic influence, and wrote as follows in a different hand :—

Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. Leave those who are incapable of seeing the light to themselves, and bear it first to those who desire it. Whoever has put his hand to the plough, and looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of God. No selfish or personal considerations ought to turn you back and lead you to abandon the work which you have to accomplish. You have begun to advance, therefore continue your course, for to stop is to withdraw from it.

We then spoke to the purified spirits who preside over this work, and the spirit who had just manifested, as follows :—"Deign to allow us to thank you for your goodness in desiring to enlighten us, and to give us light and truth. May God grant us grace to progress constantly towards that infinite love which leads to him, and towards that charity which makes itself universal in the vastness of its works." Then the medium wrote spontaneously in the same handwriting as follows :—

JESUS blesses you.

Then the medium wrote, in the same hand in which the former communications had been written :—

Digitized by Google

A spirit intermediate between Jesus and yourselves has manifested, and has transmitted to you the Master's word, like a representative authorized to sign for him. You may understand it better if we say, it is the Monarch's word transcribed by the secretary, but sealed with his arms. You know the relationship which exists between men and their spirit guides. The man of your planet is of too material a nature to enter into fluidic relations with spirits of a very superior order. Consequently the superior Head employs more or less elevated spirits, according to the extremes which he desires to connect, to transmit his words. His vigilant tenderness regards you all with equal eye, and his love takes notice of your smallest efforts; but just as Jesus is elevated too high above the spirits who are your protecting guides, for them to receive his personal instructions, so also you require intermediate agencies between Jesus and yourselves. The spirit who transmitted the Master's words to you is one of those who receive his orders, and diffuse light and knowledge under his directions. May your gratitude be profound!

May the blessing of the Lord descend on those who endeavour to subject their nature to his laws. Patience, courage, perseverance, faith and love!

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN.
With the concurrence of the Apostles.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 23–27. MARK, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 35–41. LUKE, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 22–25.

The Tempest calmed.

Matth. viii. (23) And when he entered into the boat, his disciples followed him. (24) And behold there was a great tempest in the sea, so that the boat was covered by the waves, and he was asleep. (25) And his disciples came to him and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish. (26) And he says to them, Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith? Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a very great calm. (27) And the men wondered, saying, Of what nature is this man, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

Mark iv. (35) And he saith unto them on the evening of the same

Digitized by Google

day, Let us cross over to the other side. (36) And having sent away the crowd, they took him as he was in the boat, and there were other boats with him. (37) And there arose a very great storm of wind, and the waves dashed into the boat, so that it presently began to fill. (38) And he was sleeping on a pillow at the stern, and they wake him up, and say unto him, Teacher, carest thou not that we perish? (39) And he arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind lulled, and there was a very great calm. (40) And he said to them, Why are ye faint-hearted? How is it that ye have no faith? (41) And they feared with great fear, and said to each other, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Luke viii. (22) And it happened one day that he went in a boat, and his disciples with him, and he said unto them, Let us cross over to the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. (23) And as they sailed, he fell asleep, and a storm of wind came down on the lake, and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. (24) And they came to him and awoke him, saying, Master, Master, we perish. And he arose and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water, and it ceased, and there was a calm. (25) And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they feared and wondered, and said to one another, Who then is this, who commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?

§ 118. You know that Jesus no more needed sleep than any other necessity of human life. His companions supposed him to be asleep, and it appeared to them that they awoke him. The fact was that he desired to act strongly on his disciples' imagination, and to develop their faith more and more by displaying his power over the elements. The spirits who rule over the waters and winds were obedient to him, like all others; and they prepared every thing to terrify the disciples of their Master, and afterwards quietly obeyed his orders when he commanded them to cease.

We cannot yet explain to you how the spirits produced the sudden squall or tempest, and then lulled it, for it would be beyond the present limits of your intelligence.

Every kingdom in nature is subject to the direction of spirits specially entrusted with its care. Every spirit makes use of the agencies which the Lord has put into his power. These effects are always based on the action of the spirit on the fluids. The collision of fluids causes you to feel the influence of the winds, and magnetic attraction raises the masses of water, which subside into calmness again when this attraction is reduced. Not that every wave of the ocean is subject to the action of a spirit who is commis-

Digitized by Google

sioned to move it, like a child's toy; but the spirits who govern these effects concentrate the attractive fluids at the points where the tempest is about to rise.

Everything has a cause which we can explain, but many things must still remain obscure to you. Content yourselves with the little that the state of your intelligence permits us to teach you, and endeavour one day to obtain more by means of study, labour, and observation, which you should practise with unselfish humility of mind and soul, and with faith, love, and the desire of progress.

The spirits entrusted with the control of the various departments of nature, among whom are those who control the winds and waves, are purified spirits, specially appointed for the duty, and employing good spirits inferior to themselves, when their assistance is necessary. Know that everything in nature is due to magnetism, and the operation of magnetic attraction and impulse, under spirit action. God never entrusts his power except to those who have deserved it; and he delegates the applications and workings of the immutable laws that he has established from all eternity for the control of human life and harmony, as well as for the accomplishment of his designs and providence, only to spirits whom he knows to be both capable and worthy.

§ 119. Human science enables us to foretell the place and time of meteorological and atmospheric phenomena. This has led some to regard tempests and shipwrecks as the result of blind force and necessity, and to see nothing but accident in the death of those who perish by shipwreck: and such persons necessarily deny the agency of God, and of the spirits to whom he has delegated his power, in the production of these phenomena.

Has human science also been able to determine who will fall victims, at least in appearance, to these effects?

We say in appearance; for, as we will explain presently, they are only voluntary victims, being led there by their choice of experiences, and by the influence of their own spirits, and all that has taken place is the necessary consequence of the experience or expiation which they have chosen.

Everything in the divine laws is great and wise; it is only

Digitized by Google

yourselves, O men, whose proud capacity of comprehension is so insignificant.

Your science will one day enable you to foretell the exact moment of the occurrence of natural phenomena. Your moral, physical, and intellectual elevation will then be so great that you will no longer need to suffer any such trials or expiations as shipwreck. It is inevitable that this will take place, for everything in the divine work moves regularly forward.

A day will come when all the cases which surprise you to-day will become familiar to you, from your having attained a sufficient elevation; but spirit action will nevertheless continue to exist. If your science was able to destroy it, it would also destroy the existence of God, by saying, "We have foretold tempests, and consequently they take place by necessity. Natural phenomena are thus proved to be only the result of a blind Necessity, and not the work of a Supreme Intelligence, and of his providence. It is said that this is carried out by active and devoted spirits, who thus regulate and apply the natural laws which God has established from all eternity. God is said to act thus by his free and immediate will, in the sense that he acts in accordance with these laws themselves, which he directs, applies, carries out, and executes freely, for physical, moral, and intellectual progress in life and universal harmony."

This would be to admit the existence of laws, to predict and observe their use, application, and effects, and to deny the Law-giver who has established them, because he is invisible, like the agents whom he has commissioned to use and apply them, to regulate their action, and to carry them out according to the conditions, rules, and methods which he has placed at their disposal, and established for those laws. God is the Law-giver, and his agents are the pure spirits who approach the Fire of Omnipotence. They have also submissive and devoted agents in the good and superior spirits, according to the spirit hierarchy. This would be to admit the existence of a machine, to predict and observe the effects which the Maker intended it to exhibit, and to deny both

Digitized by Google

the Artificer who made the machine and the appointed agents who work it. God is the Artificer, and the spirits are his agents.

No, the course of nature is regular, and just as man is always warned of his approaching death by the circumstances or events which prepare, precede, and accomplish it, and is consequently led to expect it when it comes; thus in the laws of nature, the course of all events is indicated by certain signs which you will understand in due time.

Tempests, like floods, atmospheric disturbances, and all the phenomena of nature, are guided by spirits appointed to the duty; but they follow the course which the Lord has traced out for them to prepare, direct, and accomplish, by the methods which he has put into their power, according to natural law.

Although science will one day be able to fix the exact moment of natural phenomena, you must not expect to predict atmospheric phenomena with as much accuracy as the hand of a watch fixes the hour. You will often be deceived in your calculations, but you will always be able to foresee the approximate time; and when human pride condescends to do so, you will be able to take needful precautions for the safety of your houses and crops, and to turn events previously regarded as calamities to the profit of humanity.

Nothing in nature is purposeless, and your ignorance alone hinders you from understanding it. There is one sense in which man is justified in styling himself the king of creation, for there is nothing secret which shall not be known, and nothing hidden which shall not be revealed, in proportion to man's physical, moral, and intellectual elevation, according to the slow but regular law of progress; for the divine goodness has subjected everything to his empire. But he must learn to govern like his Lord; like a father, and not as a tyrant. He must first break the chains of his brethren, and he will then learn to forge chains for the ocean. He must be always ready to share with his brethren, with his whole heart, and he will then learn to preserve his crops from the hail, the winds, and the scorching rays of the sun;

Digitized by Google

in short, he must attain to moral perfection before he can effect the physical perfection of his planet.

The ages which pass so slowly over all, each bring you their share of intellectual and moral progress. Yes, moral; for notwithstanding all your imperfections, you are advancing towards that which is good. You are disposed to accept, even blindly, changes which might improve the condition of your species. We are now trying to remove part of the dimness which still clouds your sight, by the New Revelation, with the aid of the missionary spirits who are incarnated among you. When you see more clearly, you will tread the path of progress with a strong firm step, and you will then make gigantic advances. Courage, courage, good labourers! The Master will visit his vine, and return satisfied, for he will find his labourers at work. Take courage, and persevere!

Everything in nature must follow a regular course, and your science is still very far from being what it ought to become. The Lord has given man great powers, but he must show himself worthy to exercise them. Everything in the divine work is wise, and everything in nature has its purpose and conduces to the grand end through the action of the spirits of the Lord, according to his will, and under the control of his immutable laws. Everything, through all the phenomena of nature, contributes to the progress of your planet and all things therein; everything conduces to the progress of humanity, and to the accomplishment of your experiences and expiations, which are one of the elements and means of progress in this work. The men who perish in a shipwreck were led there by their choice of experiences, and the result would take place whether the cause was foreseen by man or not.

He who has chosen to die a violent death, preceded by the agonies and uncertainties which accompany the last moments of a shipwrecked man, and has to struggle at the last hour between submission to the Creator, resignation, remorse for past offences, and hope in the divine goodness; and the despair, blasphemy, and mad fury which some

Digitized by Google

exhibit in such moments of terror, will be led by the direction which he has given to his own spirit to choose one ship rather than another, to engage in some business which compels him to set out at a given time, or even to count on a lucky accident, chance, his good star, &c. He will set out because he regains knowledge of his serious duties in the spiritual state during the disengagement caused by sleep, and his spirit renews its resolution to lead his body to the place where they will both terminate their experiences—the body by returning to the general mass of matter, and the spirit by escaping from its slavery, and regaining its liberty. When such a resolution is renewed, the remembrance is lost in the waking state, and leaves behind it a vague impression, which constitutes the elements of what man calls inspiration; the will which determines his actions.

Thus, like the man who perishes in a shipwreck, the man whose house is burned does not foresee the time, and the workman who toils in mines or quarries does not foresee the moment when he will be destroyed by an explosion or a fall of rock; and yet they perish in the fire or in the explosion. Why is this? Because, like the shipwrecked man, they have chosen to die a violent death, preceded by the sufferings and uncertainties which accompany death by fire or by explosion, and to struggle at this last hour between the conflicting emotions of submission and despair. They also, like the shipwrecked man, have been led to their fate by their own spirit. He who dies by fire has chosen one house rather than another before the given time; and he whose calling leads him to work in mines and quarries, has also chosen to work in one place rather than another at the appointed time.

Those will perish by shipwreck, fire, or explosion, who have reached the end of their earthly experiences, and also because such was the trial or expiation which they themselves had selected.*

* Bunyan was on sentry duty one night at the siege of Leicester, when a comrade took his place at his own request, and was shot dead. Similar instances are innumerable.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

Those who are destined to escape death, because the end of their experiences has not yet arrived, will escape. Means of safety are provided for them under the influence of the guardian spirits. Do you not see two men falling together in the same manner, and under the same circumstances? One is killed by the fall, and the other survives, and you say, " He has been miraculously saved."

When all perish in a shipwreck, a fire, or explosions in mines, it is because they had all arrived at the end of their experiences, and had themselves chosen this trial or expiation. Do you not see many men die on your earth on the same day and hour?

Under whatever circumstances death takes place, it is always because the period for the termination of the earthly experiences of a man has arrived. All these events take place under the eyes of men without their seeking to investigate either the causes of the death, or the causes and influences which prepare the means of escape, whatever they may be, in such a manner that everything is accomplished which ought to take place.

Know that God never trusts events to what you call chance. Everything regarding the termination of your experiences and expiations takes place by means of your own spirit, and under spirit influence. Everything has its cause, and the guilty spirit often chooses the penalty of retaliation. He who has committed a wilful murder in a previous existence, may ask the goodness and justice of the Lord to permit him to expire in slow torture, when his agonies purify him, and reconcile him to him whom he had offended. What we have just said respecting the so-called inevitable moment of death, and its connection with the free will of man, must not be isolated from what we shall explain when we consider the Fifth Commandment.

In the present inferior condition of your planet, war, pestilence, and famine conduce to the progress of nations, for they contribute to the accomplishment of trials and expiations, and the development of civilization, science, and moral and intellectual progress, by opening up paths of activity,

Digitized by Google

and leading to the practice of devotion and charity. Those who fall victims to these calamities are voluntary sufferers, for they have chosen, as a trial, expiation, or mission, to be born, or to find themselves living under circumstances where they are exposed to what you call visitations of Providence. These are really scourges in the sense that they destroy great and small alike, and thus remind men that all heads are equal before the Divine Power, and that when they are once fallen, they all bite the dust. Therefore do not lament when you see a country suffering under public calamity, but say, "Blessed be the Lord, who extends his rod over the multitude, and weighs the value of his people in the balance; who sends progress to the multitude, and peace to well-intentioned men."

Everything follows a regular course of progress in physical, moral, and intellectual order. Everything in nature is foreseen and carried out by the action of spirits entrusted with its care, according to the will of the Lord, and under the regulation of his laws.

Your Master stands towards your planet in the relation of God, from whom he receives direct inspiration and unlimited powers, and it was at his command that the tempest was raised and lulled, and a great calm followed, through the action of the guardian spirits who were under his control.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 28–34. MARK, CHAP. V.—VERSES 1–20. LUKE, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 26–40.

Legions of Evil Spirits cast out—Deliverance of their Victims—The Swine driven into the Sea.

Matth. viii. (28) And when he came to the other side, into the country of the Gadarenes, there met him two demoniacs coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no one could pass through that way. (29) And behold they cried out, saying, What is there betwixt us and thee, O Jesus, thou son of God? Art thou come here to torment us before the time? (30) And there was a herd of many swine feeding a long way from them. (31) And the demons besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go into the herd of swine. (32)

Digitized by Google

And he said to them, Begone. And when they came out, they went away into the herd of swine, and behold the whole herd of swine rushed down the precipice into the sea, and perished in the waters. (33) And the herdsmen fled, and went to the city, and related everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. (34) And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him they besought him to depart from their coasts.

Mark v. (1) And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. (2) And when they came out of the boat, a man from the tombs with an unpurified spirit met him immediately. (3) He had his dwelling in the tombs, and no man could bind him, no, not with chains. (4) Because he had often been bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been torn asunder by him, and the fetters dashed to pieces, and no one could overpower him. (5) And he was in the mountains and tombs throughout the night and day, crying out, and cutting himself with stones. (6) And seeing Jesus from afar off, he ran and did obeisance to him, (7) And cried with a loud voice, and said, What is there betwixt me and thee, O Jesus, thou son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not. (8) For he said to him, Come out of the man, thou unpurified spirit. (9) And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion, for we are many. (10) And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. (11) Now there was there near the mountains a large herd of swine feeding. (12) And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. (13) And Jesus immediately consented, and the impurified spirits came out, and entered into the swine, and the herd rushed down the precipice into the sea (and they were about two thousand), and were drowned in the sea. (14) And the swineherds fled, and told it in the city and in the fields. And they went out to see what was done. (15) And they come to Jesus and see the demoniac who had been possessed by the legion, sitting clothed and sane, and they were afraid. (16) And they who saw it told them what had happened to the demoniac, and about the swine. (17) And they began to beseech him to depart out of their coasts. (18) And when he went into the boat, he who had been possessed besought him that he might be with him. (19) But Jesus would not permit him, but saith unto him, Go to thy house and to thy friends, and tell them what great things the Lord had done for thee, and hath compassionated thee. (20) And he went away, and began to proclaim in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him, and all wondered.

Luke viii. (26) And they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee. (27) And as he went out upon the land, a certain man met him from the city, who had had demons for a long time, and wore no clothes, and did not dwell in a house, but in the tombs. (28) And seeing Jesus, he cried out, and prostrated himself before him, and said with a loud voice, What is there betwixt me and thee, O Jesus, son of the Most High God? I beseech thee not to torment me. (29) For he had commanded the unpurified spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times, and he was kept bound with chains and fetters, and he demolished the bonds, and was driven by the demon into the deserts. (30) And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion, for many demons had entered into him. (31) And he besought him that he

Digitized by Google

would not order them to go forth into the abyss. (32) And there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain, and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into these, and he permitted them. (33) And the demons went out of the man, and entered into the swine, and the herd rushed over the cliff into the lake, and were drowned. (34) And the herdsmen seeing what was done, fled, and went and carried the news into the city and the fields. (35) And they went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons were departed sitting clothed and sane at the feet of Jesus, and they were afraid. (36) And the eye-witnesses also told them how he that was possessed of the demons was healed. (37) Then the whole multitude from the surrounding country of the Gadarenes besought him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear, and he went into the boat and returned. (38) And the man out of whom the demons were departed besought him that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, (39) Return to thy house, and relate how great things God hath done for thee. And he departed, and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him. (40) And it came to pass that when Jesus had returned, the multitude received him gladly, for they were all expecting him.

§ 120. Material men require strongly material lessons to arrest their attention. You know the horror which the Jews felt for the swine, an animal which the laws of Moses had pronounced to be unclean.

Jesus wished to teach men how dangerous and repulsive these obsessing spirits were. He therefore permitted those who had so long obsessed this man in so cruel, violent, and extraordinary a manner, to frighten the swine who were feeding near. The witnesses, who believed that the spirits had actually entered the demoniac whom they had subjugated, and after leaving him had entered into the swine, were seized with horror, and then understood better the contempt which they ought to feel for the dangerous instigations to which all are liable who do not strive to follow the path which leads to safety.

Observe that the impure spirits were content with frightening the swine, and did not take up their abode in them. The obsessing spirit does not inhabit the man whom he has subjugated, but influences him in a fluidic manner, as we have already explained (§ 74), by keeping constantly beside him, and exerting a moral influence over him. Thus, the impure spirits who were assembled on the path of Jesus to obey his will, and to serve as instruments of the lesson which

Digitized by Google

he desired to give, frightened the swine, and drove them before them till they rushed into the lake.

Do not imagine that any common feeling, even of the most temporary description, is possible between the spirit and the animal. No corporeal subjugation ever takes place, still less substitution or possession.

We need not repeat the manner in which subjugation, possession, or substitution, are effected (cf. § 74). The influence of an obsessing spirit cannot be otherwise than material on animals, for it consists in striking them with stupor or terror.

The perisprit of the spirit cannot act fluidically on animals. No combination of fluids is possible, because their principles are not the same. But we could not explain this without entering into details for which the time has not yet come, for before man can understand them, he must engage in preparatory studies on the nature of fluids, and their effects and modes of action, according to the laws which regulate their employment, application, and distribution in each kingdom of nature; and you know that although God desires you to be aided, he also desires you to work.

When Jesus spoke to the obsessing spirits, who called themselves Legion, because there were many of them, he said, "Come out of this man." It is also said that Jesus permitted the impure spirits to enter into the swine. But this language was used because the time had not yet come to explain either the causes and effects of subjugation on men, or the controlling influence exerted by spirits on animals. These explanations were reserved for the New Revelation and were to be made at the opening of the era of Spiritism; and in the meantime it was necessary to speak to men in language appropriate to their understanding and ideas.

Do not notice the childish and futile criticism which accuses Jesus of having caused a loss to the owners of the herd of swine, by causing them to be driven into the lake, where they were drowned. Such criticisms belong only to material men, who do not understand the sense and object of the lesson which Jesus designed to give. What are

Digitized by Google

material interests worth when the safety of mankind is in question? But those who cannot free themselves from material ideas, notwithstanding their sincerity, may rest satisfied. The swine belonged to rich proprietors, to whom the loss was too trifling to be worth a thought; and even the swine-herds were not blamed, on account of the accident being obviously caused by the will of Jesus. The Lord never commits any injustice, and his wisdom takes everything into account. Everything has an object which it must necessarily attain for the good of humanity.

Do not trouble yourselves about the difference between the narrative of Matthew, who mentions two demoniacs, and those of Mark and Luke, who mention only one. There was but one subjugated man, but the discrepancy is of no importance, and nowise affects the events, and the instruction to be derived from them.

The man who was said to be "possessed by an impure spirit" was brought to the spot under the influence of the obsessing spirits, who were themselves obedient to the will of Jesus, in order that he might accomplish the work which he proposed. This man was subjugated both corporeally and mentally by a legion of evil spirits. Everything which is related of him was due to the effects of this subjugation. He suffered from the caprice of the evil spirits who had subjugated him, and this subjugation was both a trial and an expiation for him. He who has need of trials in your world has always sins to expiate, for trial and expiation go together.

This man was a medium for unconscious physical effects. The obsessing spirits acted by corporeal and moral subjugation, as we have already explained (§ 74), with the aid of the animalized fluids of their victim, but without his concurrence. When the subjugated man appeared before Jesus he was naked. The impure spirits had not actually stripped him of his clothing, but they had inspired him with a horror of all constraint. He suffered from their caprices, and could not endure to be clothed.

(Luke viii. 27, 29.)—The savage habits of the man who

Digitized by Google

lived among the mountains and in the tombs, his crying and cutting himself with stones, and his breaking his bonds, were all due to the caprice of the legion of evil spirits. They arose from the bodily and mental subjugation of the victim, and from the constraint exerted to effect it. He was an unconscious physical medium, and it appeared to men that he performed these actions himself; but the evil spirits, acting in concert, exerted a sufficient force over him to compel him to do so, by means of his power as a physical medium, and by the fluidic action of their perisprits and their will upon his. Thus they maltreated and directed him according to their caprice.

(Luke vii. 4.)—You can understand that the evil spirits who surrounded him amused themselves by hindering the guards from carrying away their victim, or by preventing it by breaking the bonds. The victim made the movements, but the power came from the evil spirits, who gave their aid by causing him to undergo violent fluidic action, resulting from the combination of the fluids of their perisprits with the fluids of his.

(Luke viii. 29.)—Some translations pervert both the letter and spirit of the original text, and say, "He was carried away by the demon." You may, therefore, consider the word "driven" as figurative. He was violently urged against his will. Do you not often say of a man who is running very fast, "He is carried away by the wind?" Doubtless such an effect might have taken place, and you have had instances in your own days; but there was nothing of the kind here. It was a frantic career, which struck those who beheld it with terror. An aerial flight would have seemed rather to be an act of "heaven" than of "hell."

After these well-known and notorious events, the man, who was so furious that no one could go that road, came out of the sepulchres, prostrated himself before Jesus, and being a speaking medium, proclaimed in a loud voice before the people that Jesus was the Son of the Most High God. He spoke thus under the influence of the evil spirits who obsessed him, who were themselves controlled

Digitized by Google

by superior spirits. They expressed themselves through the mouth of their victim in such a manner as to prove to men the identity of the Christ; for the superior spirits, by command of the Lord, permitted them to see the future, and the splendour of Jesus, who did not appear to them as a man, but as the purest among all the pure spirits who surrounded the Master.

When the evil spirits asked Jesus if he had come to torment them before the time, they alluded to the period when man should acquire sufficient knowledge of the causes and effects of subjugation to protect himself against it. A momentary prescience was given to these spirits, and they saw in one rapid glance the kingdom of the Lord established on your planet, and his powerful hand shedding light on men as the rays of the sun spread over the earth on a fine summer's day. The knowledge of the future then given to these impure spirits was only instantaneous, and was immediately effaced, as a ray of light appearing in darkness disappears at the same moment, and gives place to darkness again. The request which they made to Jesus, that he would not send them out of the country, arose from the vague attachment which some spirits feel for places where they have dwelt, either in their last incarnation, or in a previous one.

The impure spirits, still speaking through the mouth of their victim, also besought Jesus not to send them into the abyss. This expression was allegorical, and was of a nature to impress the multitude. The abyss signifies space, and space was the proper sphere of these impure spirits; space, where the criminal wanders alone, condemned to darkness and to the burning anguish of his remorse, which you may be quite sure corresponds to the abyss which your material eyes have pictured as a fiery furnace devouring actual flesh without ever consuming it. The evil spirits, or "demons," earnestly besought Jesus that they should not be forced to enter upon this state of isolation, which may be said to morally kill the spirit, as it were; but only for the purpose of alleviating his condition by leading him to repentance.

Digitized by Google

The guilty spirit, condemned to darkness and remorse, is isolated in space by the will of the Lord. He may be, and often is, condemned to a system of solitary confinement of which man can form no conception. He may be condemned to inhabit, as it were, the theatre of his crimes, or to rest in space in complete isolation, incapable either of action, of will, or of movement; without intercourse with any other spirit, and encompassed with thick darkness, which has the same effect on his organism (that is, on his spirit and his perisprit) as a heavy and polluted atmosphere exerts on a man who is in the agonies of suffocation.

For the rest, you know that expiation is always appropriate and proportioned to the faults or crimes committed, and takes place under conditions intended to lead the guilty spirit to remorse, to awaken his conscience, and to prepare him for repentance by increasing his sufferings.

But you know that no spirit is condemned to serve as an executioner to his brothers, however guilty he may be. The visions of the criminal are all produced by the action of a powerful will, which condemns the spirit to see that which it is needful to place before its eyes until it repents. It is an effect of fluidic combinations, due to spiritual magnetism, which you will learn to understand when you are sufficiently advanced to begin the work which we wish to be undertaken by the medium on the fluids and their properties.

Although human magnetism has made so little progress at present, and has so much need of improvement, it may give you some idea of the fluidic effects of the powerful will of a superior spirit. You know that the human magnetizer can act on his subject in the somnambulic state by his will, and the influence of the magnetic fluids, in such a manner as to impress him with the reality of what is only a fiction. He can cause him to see and believe what he wishes him to see and believe (cf. § 31), even after his awaking. You may meet with such instances by study and observation, even in human magnetism. You may further imagine the power which a superior spirit may exert both

Digitized by Google

by spirit-magnetism, by his powerful will, and by the effects of fluidic combinations to produce visions, that the guilty spirit may see what he is condemned to see, and be impressed by what is merely a fiction as if it were a reality.

When the impure spirits said to Jesus, "Permit us to enter into the swine," they were impelled to speak thus by the overruling and controlling power of the superior spirits. As soon as Jesus had given them the permission which they desired, they went to the swine, and terrified them by an apparition which was visible only to them. This apparition drove them to the lake by its terrifying gestures, and caused them to plunge into it.

The impure spirits were not obliged to take the human form to frighten the swine. You know that the spirit can assume any appearance which it deems necessary to obtain its ends. An inferior spirit often assumes the form of a dangerous or hostile animal when it desires to cause terror, and this was the case in the present instance. But the apparition was only visible to the swine, or else the people would not have believed that the spirits had entered into them. If there had been a seeing medium in the crowd, the will of the impure spirits would not have enabled him to see them, or the appearance which they assumed. They only showed themselves to the swine because they were permitted to do so; but they could not do more than this. Everything was accomplished according to the will of Jesus, and was proportioned to his desired object.

You need not wonder that the impure spirits were visible to the swine, and not to the people. Sometimes when two seeing mediums are present, one sees a spirit and the other does not. In such a case, the will of the spirit is the cause. In the case of animals, the will of the spirit is the sole agency, for we have told you that combination of the fluids of the spirit and the animal is impossible. But when a spirit desires to make himself visible to a seeing medium, he acts both by the power of his will, and by fluidic action. When a spirit acts upon an animal (compare p. 284), he can exert no corporeal subjugation, still less possession or

Digitized by Google

substitution ; but there is moral subjugation in the sense that the spirit can frighten the animal, strike it with stupor, and compel it to perform extravagant antics, which you may call material, but which are none the less striking to the relative intelligence of those who witness them.

The will of the obsessing spirit is alone sufficient to enable the animal to see, because the spirit of the animal is more ready to see than yours, and because the will of the spirit (no matter how inferior it may be) always predominates over that of the animal, unless the will of a superior spirit opposes it.

You must not think that a seeing animal is a medium, at least in the proper acceptation of the word, for it cannot in any case serve as an intermediary between the spirit and man. The animal has a faculty peculiar to itself, and sees without being a medium. Nevertheless, you can understand that in some cases the aptitude of the animal for seeing, chiefly shown by the terror which it experiences, may warn man of the presence of a spirit, when there is nothing either visible or tangible before him. Do not ask how the obsessing spirit acts on the visual organs of the animal to make himself visible to it. You would enter upon premature details, and each day's work is sufficient for itself. If you depart from the path which is traced out for you, you will load yourselves with a heavier burden than man is yet able to bear.

When Jesus permitted these unpurified spirits to enter into the swine, he permitted them to remain in the regions inhabited by men, and left them the power of approaching and coming in contact with humanity.

He gave them this permission that they might either remain with those who were liable to their obsessions and subjugations as a trial or expiation, or with those who were interested in the cure of their victims, that they might be benefited by their prayers, and led into the paths of reflection and moral reformation. Besides this, he desired that they should serve as means for human instruction, for these impure spirits did not remain inactive, and were driven away by the disciples of Jesus.

Digitized by Google

The man who was subjugated by this legion of evil spirits appeared to men, during their most violent attacks, to be suffering from mental alienation, and raving madness. He was then unable to control his actions, and lost consciousness of his existence; but in less excited moments, when he was comparatively calm, he recovered consciousness of his condition. He became aware of the constraint to which he was subjected, and he suffered terribly; and was thus punished for crimes committed in a previous existence. As soon as the "demons had gone out of him," and he was delivered from this moral subjugation, he recovered the use of his reason, and full liberty of body and mind. You have similar instances in your own days.

When the swineherds fled, they brought the news with them, and a multitude ran from the town and country to see what had happened. They found the man seated at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. The disciples of Jesus had given him some of their own garments, and as soon as he was released, he conformed joyfully to human customs.

"Seeing him sane, they were seized with fear." This man, whom no one could subdue, was calm and submissive before the Christ. His submission was enough to strike the multitude, for the symptoms which men regarded as raving madness, and which displayed themselves in strange, violent, and disorderly words and actions, were now replaced by calm reason, accompanied with liberty of body and mind. These phenomena were called "miraculous," because they could neither be understood nor explained.

Let not the incredulous critics of your own days deny the authentic facts which the Evangelists have transmitted to you. Let them not laugh, but study spiritual science. Let them learn and observe, without prejudice, but with humility and sufficient perseverance; let them study the New Revelation, and they will understand and believe. Has not man the revelation and manifestation of the powers of the spirit under his eyes? Has he not instances of the power of even the inferior spirits, and of their action upon

Digitized by Google

fluids, in the physical effects which have been produced in all ages, and which are still produced in your own times, in various ways, upon man and his surroundings? Have no instances fallen under the observation of man of the powers of the superior spirits, who are the ministers of the will, providence, and justice of God? Has he no instances of their power over the fluids to control and execute the laws of nature in space, for the promotion of universal life and harmony? Has he not, under his own eyes, the revelation and manifestation of the power of the superior spirits over the fluids, and of the formidable and terrible effects of this power, in what you call judgments in human language? Do you not recognize these powers in the thunderbolt which overthrows your buildings, rives the solid oak, and strikes men dead? Or in the hurricanes, which break down and carry away your trees, and overthrow your dwellings? or in floods, which ravage, break down, and sweep away everything which impedes their passage? or in the tempest, which dashes your ships upon the rocks, and engulphs or shipwrecks them?

The man whom Jesus had delivered from this legion of evil spirits, begged to be allowed to go with him; but he said, "Return to thy house, and relate what great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath compassionated thee." The man then departed, and proclaimed all that Jesus had done for him, for he was destined to smooth the way for the advent of the Lord. Jesus had worked a "miracle," which could be authenticated by many witnesses, and consequently he did not order the man whom he had released to conceal what he had done for him; but, on the contrary, he desired him to make it known. Under other circumstances he imposed silence on those who had had the good fortune to be freed from bodily or mental afflictions by him, because the work was not performed in public, and might have been disputed if he had appeared anxious to make it known; whereas it was reported quickly and surely under the appearance of mystery.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 1–8. MARK, CHAP. II.—VERSES 1–12. LUKE, CHAP. V. VERSES 17–26.

The Paralytic.

Matth. ix. (1) And he went into the boat, and crossed over, and came into his own city. (2) And behold, they brought a paralytic man to him, lying on a bed, and Jesus seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, Take courage, child; thy sins are forgiven thee. (3) And behold certain of the scribes said in themselves, This man blasphemeth. (4) And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said, Wherefore do ye ponder evil in your hearts? (5) For which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? (6) But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the paralytic) Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thy house. (7) And he arose, and departed to his house. (8) And the crowds who saw it wondered, and glorified God who had given such power unto men.

Mark ii. (1) And again he entered into Capernaum after some days, and it was reported that he was in a house. (2) And immediately many people gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door, and he preached the word to them. (3) And they come to him, bringing a paralytic, carried by four men. (4) And not being able to get near for the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was, and having broken through it, they let down the couch on which the paralytic lay. (5) And Jesus, seeing their faith, saith to the paralytic, Child, thy sins be forgiven thee. (6) But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, (7) Why does this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only? (8) And immediately Jesus knowing in his spirit that they thus reasoned in themselves, said to them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? (9) Whether is it easier to say to the paralytic, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy couch and walk? (10) But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the paralytic), (11) I say unto thee, Arise and take up thy couch, and go to thy house. (12) And he rose up immediately, and taking up the couch, he went out in presence of them all, so that they were all astonished, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it happen thus.

Luke v. (17) And it came to pass one day that he was teaching, and there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by. They were come out of every village of Galilee and Judæa, and Jerusalem, and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. (18) And behold men came carrying a man who was paralysed on a bed, and they attempted to bring him in and to lay him before him. (19) And when they could not find out how to bring him in through the crowd, they mounted upon the house, and let him down through the tiles with his little couch into the middle before Jesus. (20) And seeing their faith, he said to him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. (21) And the scribes and Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this who speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? (22) But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered, and said unto them, Why

Digitized by Google

reason ye in your hearts? (23) Which is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? (24) But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the paralytic) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy little couch, and go unto thy house. (25) And forthwith he rose up before them, and took up that upon which he had lain, and went to his house, glorifying God. (26) And amazement seized on all, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

§ 121. It is unnecessary to repeat explanations which we have already given. Jesus cured the paralytic in the same manner as he cured the centurion's servant (§ 110). This material cure was a wonderful thing, or a "miracle" in the eyes of the Scribes, or teachers of the law, as well as in those of the Pharisees and the multitude. You know that Jesus was always a spirit, though incarnated for the time in an apparently human perispritic body, and he read their thoughts. He then addressed them in language designed to teach men that he who possessed such power was above every intelligence; and thus he constrained them to admit his divine authority.

(Matth. ix. 8.)—Jesus appeared to the Scribes and Pharisees, as well as to the multitude, to be a man like themselves. These words were spoken among the multitude, and repeated by Matthew under medianimic influence, and had a hidden meaning, to be explained at the opening of the New Revelation, but designed to prepare men to understand beforehand that when they had attained the limit of perfection possible on your earth, they would also be enabled to realize among themselves the events which were called wonderful, but which are really natural, at the appointed time, according to the decrees of God.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 9–13. MARK, CHAP. II.—VERSES 13–17. LUKE, CHAP. V. VERSES 27–32.

Calling of Matthew.

Matth. IX. (9) And as Jesus went on from thence, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax-office, and saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. (10) And it came to pass that he was sitting in the house, and behold many tax-gatherers and sinners

Digitized by Google

came and reclined with Jesus and his disciples. (11) And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to his disciples, Wherefore does your Master eat with tax-gatherers and sinners? (12) And Jesus heard it, and said unto them, The strong have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. (13) But go and learn what that meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Mark ii. (13) And he went out again near the sea, and the whole multitude came to him, and he taught them. (14) And as he passed on he saw Levi, the son of Alphæus, sitting at the tax-office, and he saith unto him, Follow me. (15) And it came to pass that as he was reclining in his house, many tax-gatherers and sinners reclined with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many, and they followed him. (16) And when the Scribes and Pharisees saw him eating with tax-gatherers and sinners, they said to his disciples, Why does he eat and drink with tax-gatherers and sinners? (17) And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are strong have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I come not to call the rightous, but sinners to repentance.

Luke v. (27) And after these things, he went out, and saw a tax-gatherer named Levi, sitting at the tax-office, and he said unto him, Follow me. (28) And he forsook all, and arose and followed him. (29) And Levi made a great feast for him in his house, and there was a large crowd of tax-gatherers and others who were reclining with them. (30) But the Scribes and Pharisees murmured at them to his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with tax-gatherers and sinners? (31) And Jesus answered and said unto them, The healthy have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. (32) I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

§ 122. Jesus taught men that they should never repulse those whom they regard as unworthy. The Lord may have planted a germ of virtue, which care may develop, even where you can see nothing but fraud or impurity. Therefore be indulgent towards your brethren, hold out a helping hand to the weak, and use all your efforts to lift up the fallen. In short, imitate your Divine Model; seek out those who are sick, and use all your care to heal them.

Matthew, whom Jesus chose from among the tax-gatherers, was an exalted spirit, sent on a mission to aid the Master in the work for which he had descended to your world. When Jesus called him, he was inspired by his guardian angel and the superior spirits around, and obeyed the call at the very moment, and followed him. The great feast which he prepared furnished the occasion and opportunity for the lesson which Jesus designed to give men. Everything was arranged beforehand, and accomplished by order of the Lord

Digitized by Google

under the secret inspiration, influence, and action of the superior spirits, who were obedient to the will of the Master.

Matthew was the name which Levi, the son of Alphæus, preferred to retain when he became a disciple of Christ. He was also called Levi, and was generally known by that name. "Those who are well," said Jesus, "have no need of a physician, but they who are sick. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The man who is in good health has no need of a physician; and he who conscientiously follows the law of his God has no need of being saved, for he saves himself. Christ called to himself those who had to redeem the past. He called them to repentance; and was thus sent to those who had fallen.

Jesus also said to the Scribes, the Pharisees, his disciples, the publicans, and the sinners, "Go and learn what this meaneth, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'" The words of the prophet Hosea (vi. 6), "I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings," resemble those of the prophet Samuel (1 Sam. ii. 6), "The Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and lifteth up." These passages contain the hidden meaning of the words of Jesus, which the New Revelation will teach you.

We assure you in the name of Christ our Master, that whenever the guilty spirit repents, no matter what faults or crimes he has committed, there is not sacrifice (or eternal punishment) in store for the penitent, but mercy (or pardon) on two conditions, which are alone consistent with the infinite mercy and justice of God. Firstly, the penitent must expiate his offences after death in the errant state by mental sufferings, appropriate and proportioned to the faults or crimes which he has committed; and secondly, he must afterwards redeem and expiate the past, by progressing by means of new experiences, and reincarnation.

Yes, there is pardon wherever there is repentance. Jesus desired that mercy should arouse in man the feeling

Digitized by Google

of remorse for his fault or crime, and the desire of reparation, which results from repentance. Jesus calls men to repentance, and makes their expiation easier, and thus saves those who would otherwise have long remained impenitent.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 14–17. MARK, CHAP. II.—VERSES 18–22. LUKE, CHAP. V. VERSES 33–39.

Fasting—New Cloth—Old Vessels—New Wine—Old Wine.

Matth. ix. (14.) Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but thy disciples fast not? (15) And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber mourn so long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days shall come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast. (16) And no one putteth a patch of new cloth to an old garment, for the addition taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. (17) Nor do they put new wine into old wine-skins, for if so, the wine-skins burst, and the wine is wasted, and the wine-skins destroyed; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

Mark ii. (18) And the disciples of John and those of the Pharisees were fasting, and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and those of the Pharisees fast, and thy disciples fast not? (19) And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. (20) But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. (21) And no one seweth a patch of new cloth on an old garment, or else the new piece that filled it up taketh from the old, and the rent is made worse. (22) And no one poureth fresh wine into old wine-skins, or else the fresh wine bursts the skins, and the wine is wasted, and the bottles will be destroyed; but new wine must be put into new wine-skins.

Luke v. (33) And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and those of the Pharisees also, but thine eat and drink? (34) And he said unto them, Can the sons of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? (35) But the days shall come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. (36) And he spake a parable unto them, also: No man putteth a patch of new cloth on an old garment, or else the new maketh a rent, and the piece taken from the new does not match with the old. (37) And no one putteth new wine into old skins, or else the new wine bursts the skins, and is poured out, and the bottles are destroyed. (38) But new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved. (39) And no one drinking old wine wishes for new directly, for he says, The old is better.

§ 123. The explanations of the veiled teachings contained in these passages, all relate to the spiritual future.

Digitized by Google

The old garment, which an injudicious reparation would destroy, and the old wine-skins, which were unfit to contain new wine, because it would have fermented and burst them, represent mankind. But you, Spiritists, are the new wine-skins, and the new wine is poured out to you abundantly. Preserve it carefully, for it will bring forth good fruit. It will grow old and come to perfection in the wine-skins, and give strength, health, and life to those who are able to receive it.

The expression "bridegroom," as applied to Jesus, is derived from Hebrew ideas and customs. He who took a wife was honoured; and as Jesus is the head of the teaching which has sustained you in spite of all your wanderings, he is compared to a pure young man who lays aside his nuptial crown, and prepares to assume the government of a family. The "sons of the bridechamber" represent those who are nearest and dearest to the bridegroom.

(Matthew ix. 15.)—Jesus addressed these words to the disciples of John, and of the Pharisees; and they must be understood according to the Spirit which giveth life, and not according to the letter which killeth, that they may be comprehended in spirit and in truth. While Jesus was present with his disciples, he kept them in the path which he desired them to follow, and had consequently no need to impose penances upon them. He foresaw the abuses and wanderings which would speedily pervert his church and his children (that is, your humanity, and those who undertook to continue the work of the Apostles and of the first Christians). He foresaw the expiation which would be needful to repair their errors, the emblem of which, among the Hebrews, was fasting. The fasting which would be necessary for men to practise after the earthly mission of Jesus was completed, was not the material fasting practised by the disciples of John, and of the Pharisees. Jesus alluded to the expiations which men would be forced to impose on themselves to repair their faults; or to moral fasting. The Hebrews regarded material fasting as a penance intended to atone for the

Digitized by Google

venial offences of life. It was a reasonable ordinance, as we will presently explain, at a period when nothing but material laws could dominate over matter.

You should practise moral fasting by your remorse for the grievous offences that you commit against God every day. You break his laws, you are deficient in love and charity, and you give way to selfishness, envy, and other hidden vices which your pride and self-confidence often prevent you from detecting lurking in your heart. Ah, fast from these, and mortify your souls in order to purify them. Moral fasting is good for the guilty soul, and cleanses it from all impurity. The Lord requires nothing but moral fasting. This consists in never giving way to evil passions, however pleasant, and in voluntarily submitting to any humiliation for the good of others, or by way of example; in never yielding to any act of culpable levity, or giving way to any kind of excess. Do not think that it is very painful for man to live in peace with God. Has he not the peace and satisfaction of his conscience, as well as bodily health and strength? What is it that leads to the degeneration of the race, except the various bodily excesses that you indulge in? What weakens your intelligence except your ill-regulated and wandering thoughts, and the immoderate desire of knowing prematurely more than man ought to know, and of possessing more than he is fitted to receive? You are in society, therefore live in society; be good, loving, and thus deserving of love; but seek neither the material luxury which enervates, nor the ill-regulated knowledge which leads astray.

Jesus himself has told you that he did not desire to impose upon you the obligation of material fasting. It is not that which enters into the body of man which defiles him, because it does not go into his heart, but into his intestines, and is then cast out, but what defiles a man is that which comes from his heart. These are evil thoughts, words, and actions, the vices which degrade your humanity, and the infractions of the law of God condemned in the Decalogue, and in the words of Jesus which define all the law and the

Digitized by Google

prophets as the love of God above all things, and the love of the neighbour as oneself. Human commands have imposed on men the obligation of abstaining from food, or have given permission to take only certain kinds of food at certain times and on particular days. Such restrictions are useless for intelligent and earnest men. The Lord never required man to conform to these human commandments. Yet these restrictions had their use, though ridiculous in themselves. They set limits to excess of gluttony and luxury in an age when material laws only could control matter. And when the body was subjected to a rigorous regimen, the animal propensities were weakened, and were consequently withheld from being abused. By upholding these material regulations of fasting and abstinence, the Roman Church still remains in the age of the Scribes and Pharisees. She imposes a heavy burden on men which is no longer necessary; and as she refused to march with humanity, she has now been left behind. But everything takes place in order; God willed it thus, and his wishes are immutable.

Matthew ix. 16, 17; Mark ii. 21, 22, and Luke v. 36–39, are spiritual allegories. The men to whom Jesus spoke, and the succeeding generations previous to the new era in your own days, typify the old garment, which could not be mended with the piece of new cloth; and the old wine-skins, which would have burst if filled with new wine, because they were incapable of holding it. That is, they were incapable of receiving and preserving the New Revelation, which was reserved for a future age, when the time had come for the fulfilment of the text, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Time and reincarnation, which necessitate expiation, reparation, and progress, have now prepared the hearts and minds of men to become new vessels, fitted to preserve the new wine.

Ignorant and material men, confirmed in their traditions and prejudices, would have been crushed by too heavy a burden. They would either have rejected it, or would have been dazzled and blinded by too bright a light. They

Digitized by Google

needed first the language of parable, and the dominion of the letter according to human and material interpretations, to prepare for the advent of the Spirit by successive efforts of thought.

(Luke v. 38.) The new wine typifies the teachings of the spirits of the Lord, who come to prepare and to accomplish the end of the moral world of error and lying, and the end of your weakness and ignorance. They come to explain the simple and sublime law of Jesus, to lead you to understand it, and to develop its true spiritual meaning, by freeing the Spirit from the letter, and from all the false interpretations which men have given to it, and which have changed or falsified it, and prevented it, both heretofore and now, from bearing fruit. The new wine-skins are the true Spiritists who receive and practise these lessons; spirits who are purified, enlightened by Spiritism, and who will in their turn enlighten those typified by the old wine-skins, who cannot resist the fermentation of new ideas. Old wine-skins still exist. These are blind or interested men who derive their ideas from impure or falsified sources, and who seek to impede the work of human regeneration which forms that Church of Christ whose temple is your planet, and which all men (Jews and Gentiles) are alike called upon to join as faithful followers, by practising the law of love and charity. You know that the Church, as men have made it, must be regenerated. Therefore, Spiritists, it is yours to prepare the materials for her rebuilding, so that when the time has come to rear the edifice, the Lord's workmen may find the stones ready cut. The new wine and the new wine-skins will be preserved by the new faith, which is new in the sense that its course will be very different from that of the existing Church.

(Luke v. 39.)—You should understand the allegorical sense of these veiled words of Jesus, which were addressed to the new era now commencing. The old wine, which should be preferred, is that which is freed from any foreign substance, and which has rejected all impurity in the process of fermentation. It has been put into new wine-skins,

Digitized by Google

and has grown old in them. Consequently when you, the new generation, have allowed the development of the doctrine of Jesus which we offer you to ferment in your hearts, you can offer your brethren the old wine, which is better than the new. If you are new wine-skins, you should receive the new wine as it is brought you by the spirits of the Lord. Do not adulterate it or corrupt it by opposing the fermentation necessary to cleanse your hearts from all impurity. Any doctrine which is incompatible with the law of love and charity which Christ preached, and which he sends us to preach to you again, would hinder the new wine from growing old, and change and corrupt it in you, and lead you into folly. Such are the errors into which blind or interested men endeavour to plunge you, by offering you the new and adulterated wine, which ferments in some brains and drives them to madness.

Set an example to your brethren by practising the lessons of the spirits of the Lord, and the law of Jesus, which they explain to you in full. Live united by reciprocal and fraternal love and charity, and thus prepare for the advent of universal fraternity. Then will your brethren be moved by your example to say, "The old is better."

Yes; for the old will really be the old, though many regard it as new. Is it not the law which Jesus laid down for you that we teach afresh? Do we not send you back to him to seek for the wine, which still waits for men to taste it, after more than eighteen centuries? But it is new in one sense. At the present day it is appropriated by the New Revelation to the wine-skins which should contain it.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 18–26. MARK, CHAP. V.—VERSES 21–43. LUKE, CHAP. VIII. VERSES 41–56.

The Daughter of Jairus—The Woman with the Issue of Blood.

Matth. ix. (18) While he was saying these things to them, behold a ruler came and did obeisance to him, saying, My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. (19) And

Digitized by Google

Jesus rose up, and his disciples followed him. (20) And behold, a woman who had had an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. (21) For she said within herself, If I can only touch his garment, I shall be healed. (22) But Jesus turned round and saw her, and said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath healed thee. And the woman was healed from that hour. (23) And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute-players and the crowd making an uproar, (24) He saith unto them, Withdraw, for the little girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they ridiculed him. (25) But when the crowd was turned out, he went in and took her hand, and the little girl arose. (26) And the report of it went forth into all that country.

Mark v. (21) And when Jesus had crossed over again to the other side in the boat, a large crowd assembled round him, and he was near the lake. (22) And behold there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue named Jairus, and when he saw him he fell at his feet, (23) And besought him much, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death; come and lay thy hands upon her that she may be healed, and live. (24) And he went with him, and a large crowd followed him and thronged him. (25) And a certain woman who had an issue of blood twelve years, (26) And had suffered many things from many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse, (27) Having heard of Jesus, came behind him in the crowd, and touched his garment. (28) For she said, If I can only touch his clothes, I shall be healed. (29) And immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. (30) And immediately Jesus, knowing in himself that power had gone out of him, turned round in the crowd, and said, Who touched my clothes? (31) And his disciples said to him, Thou seest the crowd thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? (32) And he looked round to see her who had done this. (33) And the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell at his feet, and told him all the truth. (34) And he said to her, Daughter, thy faith hath healed thee; go in peace, and be healed of thy plague. (35) While he was yet speaking, there came messengers from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying, Thy daughter is dead; why trouble the Teacher any further? (36) But Jesus immediately heard what was said, and saith to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not fear; only believe. (37) And he permitted no one to follow him, save Peter and James, and John the brother of James. (38) And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and much weeping and wailing. (39) And coming in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this tumult, and weep? the little child is not dead, but sleepeth. (40) And they ridiculed him. But he put them all out, and taketh the father and mother of the little child, and those who were with him, and goeth in where the little child was laid out. (41) And taking the hand of the little child, he saith unto her, Talitha, Coumi; the translation of which is, Little girl, I say unto thee, Arise. (42) And the little girl rose up immediately, and walked about, for she was twelve years old, and they were bewildered with great astonishment. (43) And he gave strict orders that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Luke viii. (41) And behold there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue, and he fell at the feet of Jesus, and besought him to come to his house. (42) For his only daughter

Digitized by Google

was about twelve years old, and she was dying. And as he went, the crowds thronged him. (43) And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, who had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, (44) Came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment, and immediately her issue of blood stanched. (45) And Jesus said, Who touched me? And when all denied, Peter and those with him, said, Master, the crowds throng thee and press thee, and dost thou say, Who touched me? (46) And Jesus said, Some one hath touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out of me. (47) And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and fell at his feet, and declared unto him before all the people why she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. (48) And he said to her, Daughter, be of good cheer, thy faith hath healed thee; go in peace. (49) While he yet spake, there came some one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, and saith unto him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Teacher. (50) And when Jesus heard it, he answered him saying, Do not fear; only believe and she shall be healed. (51) And when he went into the house, he permitted no one to come with him, except Peter and James and John, and the child's father and mother. (52) And they all wept and bewailed her; but he said, Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleepeth. (53) And they ridiculed him, knowing that she was dead. (54) But he put them all out, and took her hand, and called, saying, Child, arise. (55) And her spirit returned, and she arose immediately, and he directed them to give her something to eat. (56) And her parents were astonished, but he commanded them to tell no one what had happened.

§ 124. In the course of these events, Christ wished to console a father, to set an example of faith to the multitude, and also to continue the series of teachings which his earthly mission was designed to embody.

Christ cured the sick woman by means of his powerful will, as in other cases. He was enveloped in vitalizing fluids, and dispensed them to those who needed them. We cannot give you fuller particulars of the mode of this cure, for man is not yet capable of understanding the nature, effects, and modes of action of the fluids. Let it suffice you for the present that Jesus made use of vitalizing and restorative fluids at his pleasure. It may seem surprising that Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" but he desired to lead the woman to acknowledge her cure before the multitude, and thus to establish the "miracle" in the presence of all.

In the case of the daughter of Jairus, the spirit had not abandoned the body for ever, but was only absent until Jesus recalled it. It had permission to absent itself, that the body might lie in complete torpor, and present every

Digitized by Google

appearance of actual death to human eyes. All who saw her thought that the daughter of Jairus was dead. She was so in appearance, and her death was regarded as obvious and final; but she was really in a state of complete inertia and catalepsy, which deceived the most experienced eyes. There was total suspension of all feeling and of every vital movement. There was no movement of the pulse, no warmth, no breathing; she looked like a corpse, and lay in complete physical and material insensibility so great that even blows or wounds would have failed to elicit any movement or other sign of life.

(Mark v. 35–41; Luke viii. 49–54.)—But Jesus said, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." This was the fact. It was only sleep—natural, ordinary sleep. You can understand that since the absence of the spirit plunges the body into a deep sleep, the complete disengagement of the spirit produces a state of complete catalepsy. The spirit of the daughter of Jairus was only absent. She was permitted, and not commanded to leave her body, for the spirit needs no command to free itself from the body, but rather to return. When the bird escapes from its narrow cage, it does not desire to return to it. You may understand the position of the spirit by a comparison taken from human life. The soldier, absent on furlough, knows when his leave of absence has expired; and how much more the spirit under similar circumstances! If the spirit of the daughter of Jairus had forgotten or resisted, the superior spirits who surrounded her, and watched over her to see that her absence was prolonged for the exact period necessary for the work which Jesus intended to perform, would have obliged her to return. But this would have been rebellion on her part, and she could not thus have opposed the will of Jesus, for she had accepted this mission.

This state of complete catalepsy, which made men believe that she was dead, and that there was an actual resurrection in the sense which men attach to the word, took place because it had been thus decreed by the Lord, for the fulfilment of the mission of Jesus, and the results which it was

Digitized by Google

designed to produce, both in the present and future. Every remarkable event during the passage of Jesus on your earth was foreseen and provided for by the incarnation of spirits who were destined to aid in its accomplishment. Do you think that the sovereign Master of the universe could entrust anything to what you call chance or accident?

The spirit of Jairus' daughter had not abandoned her body, though it was completely disengaged, and the body was thrown into a deep sleep. The spirit was still bound by the fluidic cord of the perisprit, which unites the spirit to the body, though invisible to human eyes; so that life always existed and was maintained in the body, though suspended by a condition of complete catalepsy, which simulated real death to the beholders. Jesus said to those who surrounded the daughter of Jairus, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." By an effort of his powerful will he recalled the spirit to its prison, and restored health to the child's body by magnetic action. Upon this she awoke, and the child was cured; and in order to render the event still more striking, Jesus commanded them to give her something to eat. The presence of the flute-players was a Hebrew custom on similar occasions.

The report of the "resurrection" of the daughter of Jairus spread through the whole country, although Jesus ordered the father and mother and those present to say nothing about it.

You know that the crowd was not present, for you are told that Jesus left them outside. Jesus knew what was hidden in the future, and did not wish that his reputation should spread among the priests and Levites at that moment. They despised the ignorance and credulity of the people, and this (even where they did not suspect any imposture) prevented them from believing anything which they regarded as "miraculous" (that is, as impossible) which rested on popular report. It would have been different if the fact of the "resurrection" of the daughter of Jairus had been certified by Jairus himself, who was one of the rulers of the synagogue, and a just and highly esteemed man. If any one had questioned Jairus about the popular reports, he

Digitized by Google

could have easily evaded the question. But nothing of the kind happened, for the priests and Levites did not trouble themselves much about anything that did not concern them personally, especially with regard to popular rumours, in which they put no belief.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 27–31.

The Blind Men Cured.

(27) And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying out, and saying, O Son of David, have compassion on us. (28) And when he came into the house, the blind men came to him, and he saith unto them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. (29) Then he touched their eyes, saying, Let it be unto you according to your faith. (30) And their eyes were opened, and Jesus strictly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. (31) And they went out, and spread abroad his fame through all that country.

§ 125. Jesus effected these cures like others which he had previously performed, by the action of his will and magnetic power, by directing fluids on the eyes and organisms of the two blind men, which were appropriate to the nature and cause of the blindness with which they were afflicted.

If the spirit who suffers from physical blindness, either from birth or afterwards, is only condemned to it for a time, he will find the light of which he has been deprived, on his passage through life. Such cases are rare; but as humanity becomes purer, the shorter and milder will such expiations become; and men will grow more and more able to use those means to mitigate them which the Lord has placed in their hands, though they are still unknown to you. Blindness (and we may add deafness and dumbness) can be removed by magnetism, from whatever cause it arises, provided that the spirit has only a temporary trial to undergo, and has borne it in such a manner as to obtain its mitigation from the Lord. If he murmurs, or does not bear his chastisement with patience and resignation, it may be prolonged, and in this case the means of removing the evil are withheld from him.

Man may obtain similar results accidentally, by the power

Digitized by Google

of his will, and by magnetic action. But he cannot do this unless great purity gives him great power, when he is aided by superior spirits, who select and place at his disposal the fluids which are suited to the results which he desires to obtain. This is a treasure which is reserved for you, and which you ought to acquire, for profane hands (or those unworthy of such a favour) can only attain it imperfectly. Man can only acquire this purity and power, and the aid of the superior spirits, by purifying and elevating himself. If a spirit is only condemned to physical blindness for a time, he will ultimately meet with incarnate spirits who are commissioned to put an end to these temporary trials or expiations.,

In order that man should be able to cure blindness, deafness, and dumbness, and all other human diseases and infirmities, with the same certainty and precision as Jesus, it would be necessary for him to elevate himself, and also qualify himself to understand the nature, effects, and active properties of the various vitalizing, strengthening, restorative, purifying, and regenerative fluids which are needed to destroy the causes of diseases and infirmities, whether these arise from disease in the organism itself, or from some external cause. The fluids act by instantaneously destroying extraneous substances much more completely, and under much more favourable conditions, than by a surgical operation ; and thus they cure diseases or infirmities arising from a nervous or paralytic cause.

Any infirmity which visibly modifies the ordinary existence of man is a trial or expiation. Blindness, either temporary or permanent, according to the degree of guilt, is imposed on him who has refused to aid his brethren, or has abused his powers, and is doomed to suffer the penalty of retaliation. He must live in dependence, and endure the privations imposed upon him by the absence of those faculties which were his strength or pride in a preceding existence.

Jesus forbade the two blind men to speak of what he had done for them, because he did not wish men to suppose that he desired to obtain notoriety by human means. He who performs such works, and forbids it to be made known,

Digitized by Google

cannot be regarded as a charlatan, or as an ordinary man, who desires to make a reputation, and to attract men to him for mercenary ends. Men were then similar to what they are to-day. Under some circumstances, Jesus appeared to shroud himself in mystery, that the fame of the great deeds which he performed might thus be increased. All phenomena which were beyond the laws of nature as then known, were intended to serve a moral purpose. But all were not prepared to accept them under the same conditions; some required publicity, while others lent a more favourable ear to what was related to them as a mystery. The chief art of the physician is to appropriate the remedy to the nature of the disease.

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 32–34. LUKE, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 14–20.

Case of Dumb Possession—Blasphemy of the Pharisees.

Matth. ix. (32) And as they were going out, behold they brought to him a dumb man, possessed with a demon. (33) And when the demon was cast out, the dumb spake; and the crowds marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. (34) But the Pharisees said, He casteth out demons through the ruler of the demons.

Luke xi. (14) And he was casting out a demon, and it was dumb; and it came to pass that when the demon was cast out, the dumb spake, and the crowds wondered. (15) But some of them said, He casteth out demons through Beelzeboul, the ruler of the demons. (16) And others, testing him, sought of him a sign from heaven. (17) But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and a house divided against a house, falleth. (18) And if Satan be divided against Satan, how shall his kingdom stand? For ye say that I cast out demons through Beelzeboul. (19) And if I by Beelzeboul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? By this shall they be your judges. (20) But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, is not the kingdom of God come upon you?

§ 126. The evil spirit rendered this man dumb by a fluidic action upon the organs of speech, and his victim was consequently said to be possessed. In the case of a blind or deaf man, the obsessing spirit often paralyzes the sight or hearing by directing a current of the fluid enveloping him on these organs, and temporarily depriving the patient of their use. Or he paralyzes the voice in the same manner, and inflicts a temporary dumbness on his victim. Jesus commanded

Digitized by Google

the obsessing spirit to depart, upon which the fluidic action which caused the dumbness ceased, and the dumb spake.

The subjugation and consequent dumbness from which this man suffered were a trial and expiation. Always seek for the opposite side of punishment, which will show you the fault which the punishment is designed to correct. When the dumb man felt the need of expression, and torrents of eloquence arose in him, although he was condemned to keep silence, he expiated an abuse of language. He had been an orator, who had helped to lead the people into serious errors, and was consequently doomed to this expiation; but only for a time, for he had borne his punishment with patience and resignation, without murmuring, and Jesus delivered him from it.

The priests and Pharisees brought an accusation against Jesus which is very similar to that commonly urged against Spiritists. Do they not accuse you also of being in league with evil spirits? And do they not still say that it is the devil who preaches the love of God, and the renunciation of worldly things as the means and instruments of all evil thoughts and passions? Is it not the devil who is still accused of teaching you unlimited charity towards your brethren, horror of everything which might lead you into evil, and unrestricted pardon of all insults and injuries, no matter how serious?* You see the conclusions which you may draw from the charge thus made against the Just One. Follow his steps; his answer is complete, and it is likewise applicable to you.

(Luke xi. 19.)—Jesus alluded to those who should walk in his steps by seeking to purify and elevate themselves, and should cast out "demons" by prayer and fasting.

The true Spiritists are those children of men who purify themselves, and raise themselves above their fathers by moral fasting and prayer. They thus become their natural judges, and still drive away demons.

* These words were medianimically dictated in February, 1863.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 35–38.

Sheep without a Shepherd.

(35) And Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and infirmity among the people. (36) And seeing the crowds, he pitied them, because they were desponding, and wandering like sheep without a shepherd. (37) Then he said to his disciples, The harvest indeed is much, but the labourers are few. (38) Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he may send forth labourers into his harvest.

§ 127. Men were abandoned to themselves, and required to be re-united under a law which they could follow; for the law of Moses (except the Decalogue, and the command to love God and the neighbour) consisted of material regulations, both from the human point of view, and still more by the traditions through which men had hidden the law of God under a bushel. It had thus become a burdensome yoke, just as the law of the Church oppresses you at the present day; for everything in it which goes beyond the law of Jesus, is of human origin, and consists of human commandments and interpretations, which have altered or falsified his simple and sublime law by unwarrantable traditions.

The multitude was great, and as Jesus had only a short time to remain among men, he entreated his disciples to gather round them all who were able and willing to preach the pure morality which he taught. He was a watchful master, and needed shepherds to send to gather his sheep from all quarters.

We repeat that everything has its cause. Both as regards those who carried on the work of Moses, and as regards the Church, which was commissioned to continue the work of Jesus, everything took place as was needful, according to the period, and the variations of human intelligence, as influenced by human reason and free-will, struggling under the powerful impulse of progress. Everything has its cause in relation to the ages, and every phase of humanity receives development and progress proportioned to its intelligence, progressively and successively, at each era, and by a new

Digitized by Google

revelation at the time appointed by the Lord. The reign of the letter has now performed its part, and therefore "kills;" for the hour has come for the advent of the Spirit which giveth life.

A new era is opening in your days; and Jesus, as at the time of his earthly mission, has looked upon all nations, and has taken pity on them, for they are loaded with evils, and wander like sheep without a shepherd. We come to you in the name of Christ, and by the commandment of the Lord, to repeat the words which he addressed to his disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send labourers into his harvest."

Assemble round you all earnest men who are able to preach the pure morality taught by Christ. He is a watchful master, and has still need of shepherds to send to all parts of the earth to gather together his sheep. New and faithful labourers, you who are true Spiritists, the Master's new disciples; go forth and teach the nations under the guidance of the spirits of the Lord, who come to communicate with men, and bring them the New Revelation—not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. Explain to them the law of the Master in spirit and in truth, which is the New Revelation taught by the spirits of the Lord, and the heavenly virtues from which men have wandered. Exhort your brethren, both by teaching and example, to practise virtue, duty, work, love, and charity, in material, moral, and intellectual order, and thus to practise human fraternity. Recall the wandering sheep to the fold. They wander in the deserts of error or lying, and fall a prey either to intolerance, fanaticism, superstition, and religious despotism, or to incredulity and materialism. These evil influences bring them under the sway of pride, selfishness, avarice, cupidity, envy, jealousy, sensuality, intemperance, or luxury; and in short, subjugate them to the vices and bad passions which degrade your humanity.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 2–4. MARK, CHAP. III.—VERSES 13, 14, 16–19. LUKE, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 12–15.

Names and Calling of the Apostles.

Matth. x. (2) And these are the names of the twelve Apostles; First, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother. (3) James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew, the tax gatherer; James, the son of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, who is called Thaddæus. (4) Simon, the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

Mark iii. (13) And he goeth up into the mountain, and calleth whom he would, and they come to him. (14) And he appointed twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach. (16) And he gave Simon the name of Peter; (17) And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he called them Boanerges, that is, the sons of thunder. (18) And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphæus, and Thaddæus, and Simon the Canaanite; (19) And Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

Luke vi. (12) And it came to pass in those days that he went out to the mountain to pray, and passed the night in praying to God. (13) And when it was day, he called his disciples to him, and chose twelve from among them, whom also he named Apostles. (14) Simon, whom he also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James, and John, Philip, and Bartholomew. (15) Matthew, and Thomas, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon who is called Zelotes; Judas, the brother of James; and Judas Iscariot, who also was the traitor.

§ 128. Men believed that Jesus went up into the mountain to pray, and passed the night in praying to God; but in reality, when he was out of human sight, he retired to the superior regions to watch over the affairs of your globe, and to issue the Sovereign Master's commands. In the morning he again rendered himself visible and tangible. He then called his disciples, and chose the twelve Apostles from among them.

The names which Jesus gave to certain Apostles related to their individual characters and missions. Among the twelve was Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus, and who was a spirit of great intelligence; but when he asked to assist Jesus, he assumed a mission beyond his strength, and a heavier burden than he was able to bear, and failed. In due time we shall tell you how he came to demand this mission, why it was entrusted to him, and the reason of his failure.

Digitized by Google

LUKE, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 17–19.

Descent from the Mountain—Cures.

(17) And he went down with them, and stood in a level place, and a crowd of his disciples, and a large multitude of people from all parts of Judæa and Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases by him. (18) And those who were troubled by unpurified spirits were healed. (19) And all the multitude sought to touch him, for power proceeded from him and healed them all.

§ 129. You have already received full explanations (§ 74) relative to the cure of diseases and the casting out of obsessing spirits, and we need not repeat them here. You also understand the nature of the power which proceeded from Jesus. It was the fluids which he shed upon the patients by means of his will and magnetic power, more especially on those who approached him.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 1, 5–15. MARK, CHAP. III.—VERSE 15; CHAP. VI.—VERSES 7–13. LUKE, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 1–6.

Instructions given to the Apostles.

Matth. x. (1) And calling to him his twelve disciples, he gave them power over unpurified spirits, that they might cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and infirmity. (5) Jesus sent away these twelve, and commanded them, saying, Go not away into the path of the Gentiles, and enter not into a city of the Samaritans; (6) But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (7) And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is at hand. (8) Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons; freely ye have received, freely give. (9) Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your girdles; (10) Nor pouch for your journey, neither two coats, nor sandals, nor staff; for the labourer is worthy of his living. (11) And into whatever town or village ye enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide until ye go thence. (12) And when ye come into the house, salute it. (13) And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; and if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. (14) And whoever will not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. (15) Verily, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city.

Mark iii. (15) And to have power to heal diseases, and to cast out demons.

Mark vi. (7) And he called the twelve to him, and began to send them forth by two and two, and he gave them power over the

Digitized by Google

unpurified spirits. (8) And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; neither pouch, nor bread, nor copper in the girdle. (9) But to be shod with sandals, and not put on two coats. (10) And he said unto them, Wherever ye come into a house, there abide till ye depart thence. (11) And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city. (12) And they went out, and preached that men should repent. (13) And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

Luke ix. (1) And he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to cure diseases. (2) And commanded them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. (3) And he said unto them, Take nothing for the journey, neither staves, nor pouch, nor bread, nor silver, nor have two coats apiece. (4) And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. (5) And whoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. (6) And they went through the villages preaching the good news, and healing everywhere.

§ 130. Jesus sent his disciples to preach first to those belonging to his own nation, humanly speaking, to strengthen family, fraternal, and patriotic ties. He forbade his disciples to take anything with them, to teach them that they were missionaries of the Lord, and should leave to him the care for worldly things, and attach no importance to material prosperity. He desired them to salute the houses where they were received, and to shake the dust from their feet where they were repulsed, that they might be convinced that the Master followed them everywhere, binding what they bound, and loosing what they loosed.

Jesus worked on the human imagination of his disciples by human means, in the positive instructions intended for the men to whom he spoke. They also relate figuratively to the mission of all those who, like them, are commissioned to bear the word of the Lord from door to door. We say figuratively, because they were equally addressed to future generations, who might be living under similar conditions. The words were spoken prophetically, if you will, for the promise was intended to be fulfilled in all ages. Although there have been faithless shepherds, there have also been others who have faithfully tended their flocks, and have themselves practised the morality which they taught, with

Digitized by Google

the heart, and not with the lips only, and thus qualified themselves to bind and loose both in earth and heaven. The disciples were called upon to disseminate the truth, as Spiritists are required to do at the present day. Set forth on the path, and follow the disciples of Christ. They have prepared the way for you; follow them bravely.

§ 131. What is meant by the power of the Apostles and their successors to bind and loose on earth and in heaven?

The true successors of the disciples of Jesus can obtain the same privileges, provided they can attain to the same purity. Thus, those among you who are true Spiritists, and exert every effort to raise yourselves towards the Lord, can bind and loose on earth that which shall be equally bound or loosed in heaven. But the true interpretation of the words is as follows:—Man alone is incapable of dictating to the Lord the course which he must follow, and of pronouncing judgment to him; but when the incarnate spirit has arrived at a certain degree of elevation, he can and ought to understand the will of the Supreme Judge beforehand. Consequently, he is enabled to perceive the judgment which will be passed upon human actions; and according to the sincerity of repentance, the mercy with which the Judge will treat offenders. It is in this sense that you should understand these words, which human pride has turned into an arbitrary action* and a shameful traffic,† for those who abused it well knew that they were incapable of executing it, and now feel it more than ever.

In availing ourselves of the expressions "to bind and loose," we have used terms employed in the Scriptures, and which we shall afterwards specially explain to you. The faithful disciples of Jesus were elevated spirits, who were never swayed by any feeling of personal animosity, and judged the spirit and not the man justly. They were enabled to estimate the characters of those whom they addressed,

* By claiming the power of absolving or condemning, by granting or refusing absolution, and by remitting or retaining sins, not by way of declaration, but as a judicial sentence.

† By the sale of indulgences.

Digitized by Google

by inspiration, under spiritual influence. Consequently, if they found men to be humble and upright, they blessed them, and exhorted them to follow the path which they pointed out to them; and Jesus approved of their conduct. But if they met with backward spirits, whose experiences were far from being completed, and who disregarded their words, they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and departed. Spirits of a superior order do not sympathize with guilty and hardened spirits; and the Lord permitted the weight of as painful an expiation as necessary to fall upon them.

But the Church fell into error, and applied to herself the words which Jesus addressed to spirits incarnated on a mission. She believed herself to have inherited this infallibility, and that the Holy Spirit had come to set his seal upon it. She assumed that she received the inspiration, aid, and protection of superior spirits by command of the Lord; but she overlooked the necessity for holiness, virtue, and moral elevation. Consequently, she attempted to use weapons which she was unable to wield, and wished to retain the key of the abode of all purity in hands which were less pure than those of the Apostles, and were sometimes soiled. She has rejected the elect, and admitted the rejected; and in her wilful blindness has plunged herself deeper and deeper into the darkness which arises from pride and self-confidence. Yet she will awaken, and then the dream with which she has been amusing herself will vanish in the radiance of the new dawn. The trumpet of the Last Judgment will sound in the ears of the Church from the four corners of the globe, and the angels of the Lord will appear in their glory—not as it is understood in erroneous interpretations, but in the glory of purity; and the disciples of Jesus, again reincarnated to finish the work which they have begun, will yet come to "bind and loose" on earth, and the Lord will "bind and loose" in heaven; for they will be commissioned to do this, as formerly, and the judgment will not be a nullity.

Take courage, children of our Church, the Church of the Lord! The time is approaching when the disciples and

Digitized by Google

their Master will again appear among you; when your unsealed eyes shall behold the Just One in the clouds of heaven; and the angels, or purified spirits, shall descend among you, to extend their brotherly arms to you, and wield a still greater influence over you. Raise your songs of joy, and rejoice and again rejoice, for the time is approaching.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN.
With the concurrence of the Apostles.

§ 132. What did Jesus mean by his directions in Matth. x. 5, 6?

His first object was, as we have said, to strengthen the ties of family, fraternity, and country in the eyes of his contemporaries, and of mankind in general. Besides, he did not yet design to strike at the prejudices of the Jews, who believed that they were the only nation chosen to receive the blessings of the Lord. They would have exclaimed against the sacrilege, if they had seen the disciples of Jesus preaching repentance and the love of God to those whom they considered to be excluded by the Father of all men from their rightful share of the inheritance. The mission to the Gentiles was proclaimed afterwards, at a fitting time. The Samaritans were an heretical sect of the Jews, and the Gentiles included all who professed a different religion from the Jews.

What is the meaning of the words, "Go ye and preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand?"

The kingdom of God is near, whenever men accept the means of attaining it. Christ taught men those human virtues which would shorten the series of their earthly trials; and therefore the kingdom of heaven was preached to those who followed his teachings. At the present day, even more than at that period, Christ says to the true Spiritists, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" for you are no longer shown devious paths to reach it, and you cannot possibly mistake it any longer. He shows you through the spirits of the Lord, who bring you the New Revelation, the one

Digitized by Google

straight path which you ought to follow. He now points out clearly the obstacles which have hitherto impeded you, saying, "Avoid them. I will stretch out my hand to enable you to overcome them." He shows you how you can renew your failing strength by prayer, love, and faith, practised in sincerity, and not with the lips only. He shows you Faith enlightening your path with a divine torch, and raises the veil which has so long hidden that blessed light which gives sight to the blind. He shows you the hope of the place of rest which awaits his docile and submissive children, and holds out his hand to lead you to it. Finally, he opens the gates of the sanctuary, and shows you the powerful and vivifying love of your God, which salves your sores and heals your wounds, and he shows you your God standing before the threshold of the celestial dwelling. Christ calls to you, saying, "Come, all ye whom I have called from the four quarters of the world; come to enjoy rest and happiness here."

Do not misunderstand the meaning of these figurative expressions. It is not difficult for you to comprehend them. The place of repose which awaits you is infinite space, where happy spirits dwell in eternal activity, and enjoy the happiness of the elect, to which all men are called, and which all ought to attain. Rest and happiness denote the calmness enjoyed by the spirit who has arrived at the end of his trials, and who may be compared to an exhausted traveller who arrives at a place of rest, where he enjoys calmness and refreshment after his fatigues and the heat of the sun. But you know that work is the eternal law for the spirit who has arrived at his resting-place, as well as for him who is still passing through his trials, and he does not rest in eternal inaction and contemplation. He labours in space, as the workman and servant of the Father, who is always working, and who creates, has created, and will create throughout eternity. But the work of the spirit who has arrived at the end of his trials is a very different thing to him from what it is to you. To him work is joy and boundless happiness, the fulfilment of his promised blessed-

Digitized by Google

ness. Work to us is a thousandfold sweeter than is the indolent repose of your existence to you.

§ 133. What is the true spiritual meaning of the following passages: Matth. x. 1 and 8; Mark iii. 15; and Luke ix. 1?

The disciples of Jesus were elevated spirits, incarnated on a mission, who had accepted the severe conditions of the first phase of their human existence which preceded their calling, that they might concur in the work of redemption. They were aided in their labours by the superior spirits, who continually accompanied them, and neutralized the influence of the flesh over the spirit, by joining their faculties to those which they themselves possessed. Hence resulted the great works which the Apostles were able to accomplish. The disciples of Jesus accepted a human existence, of which the first portion was passed amid such humble and ordinary surroundings, to give greater emphasis to the transformation of the ignorant tax-gatherer or fisherman into the inspired man who spoke all languages, and worked "miracles" in the eyes of astonished nations.

Jesus consequently gave his Apostles power and authority to heal all diseases and infirmities, restoring health to the sick, "raising the dead," cleansing the lepers, and driving away the evil spirits, who are called indifferently demons and impure spirits. He gave them this power by granting them the assistance, support, and co-operation of the superior spirits, who were themselves assisted by the pure spirits, who exerted an immediate power over all evil spirits, and had power to heal all diseases and infirmities, as well as (to human eyes) to raise the dead. The Apostles were mediums; or, in other words, intermediaries between the superior spirits who assisted them, and men. They spoke and acted with the aid of their medianimic faculties, under spiritual influence, in order to aid in the work of redemption.

When they cast out evil spirits, or released men from their corporeal or mental subjugation, they commanded the obsessing spirits to quit their victims, in the same words which Jesus employed, "Depart from this man," and the obsessing spirits were instantaneously driven away by the

Digitized by Google

will-power of the superior spirits, aided, if necessary, by that of the pure spirits. In order to restore health to the sick, to cleanse the lepers, and to cure all diseases and infirmities, the Apostles laid their hands on the patients, or anointed them with oil. The cure was effected by the magnetic action of their human will, and at the same time the superior spirits combined their will with the Apostles' by means of spiritual magnetism, and dispensed, under their hands, the fluids adapted to the desired effects, and to the cure which they wished to accomplish. Although the Apostles anointed several patients with oil under medianimic influence, it was only to render the cure more intelligible to men. They had no need to have recourse to any material or external methods to effect the cure, for the hand of the human magnetizer, or the will of the Just One, could as easily have directed the fluids with which the oil was charged into the organism. When they used olive oil thus, they employed the means at their disposal to show men that anything may serve for the accomplishment of the will of God, if faith is present.*

You must not misunderstand the command of Jesus to his Apostles, to "raise the dead." We have already told you that the immutable will of God never compels the spirit to unite itself to the corruption of a corpse. It was necessary for the success of the mission of Jesus that he should make a strong impression on the imagination of the backward and material men of that age, and conform his language to their beliefs and prejudices, in order to prepare them and subsequent generations to receive the New Revelation at the time appointed by the Lord, when the necessary progress should have been accomplished. When Jesus said to his Apostles, "Go and raise the dead," he made use of human expressions, which were understood and comprehended. There was no expression to denote

* A friend of the Translator's, a well-known medical man in London, not belonging to any heterodox school of medicine, finds anointing with oil to be an exceedingly powerful and efficacious remedy in febrile and inflammatory cases, more especially in the diseases of children.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

the cataleptic state, and the return of the spirit to the body with which it was connected by the fluidic link of the perisprit. The ancients were anxious to rid themselves of sources of infection, and burned or buried their dead as soon as the signs which were supposed to denote the cessation of life manifested themselves. Many expiations by fire or hunger were thus accomplished in ages where human ignorance served to expiate the crimes committed in previous existences. The cataleptic state was almost unknown to the ancients, but some more advanced minds had a vague notion of it, although they did not comprehend it either scientifically or spiritually. But the Apostles, the Disciples, the multitude who followed Jesus, and the bulk of the Scribes, Pharisees and priests, knew nothing of this.

The Evangelists, who were inspired historical mediums, reproduced the words, "Go and raise the dead," under medianimic influence and inspiration, as Jesus pronounced them. They used the words at their disposal to relate the facts, but without knowing the secret thought of Jesus, which was hidden under words which were left open to the human interpretations which they, or other men, put upon them. We have already explained that all cases of "raising the dead" to human eyes, whether in the Old or New Testament, were due solely to the cataleptic state. All the men who were brought to life after they were considered dead were in this state, and had not broken the link which unites the spirit to the body. They were thought dead by men, and would really have died but for the aid of the superior spirits who lent the assistance of their powerful will and magnetic power either to the prophets, who were unconscious of their aid, and, like other men, regarded the "resurrection of the dead" as the direct work of God himself; or to the Apostles, who were also ignorant of their assistance, and considered the "resurrection of the dead" as the direct work of the Master himself. In the case of the Prophets, as well as of the Apostles, the pure and superior spirits acted under the direction of Jesus; for you must always remember that he is the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet and

Digitized by Google

its humanity. He watched over its formation, and has directed its progress since; and he will lead your planet and yourselves to perfection.

§ 134. What is the meaning of the words, "Freely ye have received, freely give?"

In the thought of Jesus, these words related chiefly, but not exclusively, to the present. The medianimic faculties of the Apostles, and the aid and concurrence of the pure and superior spirits, were the means by which they were to accomplish their mission, to proclaim the good news, preach the kingdom of God, heal diseases and infirmities, "raise the dead" to the eyes of men, and drive away the evil spirits. Their medianimic powers, and the aid and concurrence of the good spirits, were the free gift of God.

When Jesus said to his Apostles, "Freely ye have received, freely give," he taught them that divine gifts should never be made the object of traffic or speculation, or the means of material human existence. He taught them that they should have but one motive in the accomplishment of their mission, and should be influenced in thought and heart, and in their words and actions, solely by the love of God and of their neighbour, by humility, and the most perfect disinterestedness.

These words are also addressed to those mediums who are called to be the interpreters of the good spirits, and their intermediaries to men. They are addressed to all those Apostles of the New Revelation who are inspired by the spirits of the Lord, and are called upon to preach the law of Jesus, and to explain and develop it in spirit and in truth. Christ still calls upon you who are Spiritists or mediums to-day, through our teaching, freely to give, as ye have received freely, and thus to walk in his steps. God gives everything freely to you as he gave to the Apostles, for the accomplishment of your mission.

§ 135. What were the exact words pronounced by Jesus, and recorded in Matth. x. 9, 10; Mark vi. 8, 9; and Luke ix. 3?

"Take neither pouch, nor bread, nor gold, nor silver, nor

Digitized by Google

money in your girdles, nor two coats, but take a staff to sustain you on the journey, and put sandals on your feet, that you may be able to support the march."

§ 136. What is the intention of these words?

By giving these directions to his Apostles, Christ taught material men to despise earthly wealth, and to rely on the goodness of the Lord. The lesson which Jesus designed to convey to you, and to the men of your own times, in speaking words addressed also to the future, was this: Do not attach your life to things which do not last, but to those which do not perish. Do not seek to lay up stores of perishable erudition and knowledge in advance, but rather to instruct yourselves in that which leads to eternal life. We do not advise you to neglect the cares and studies which relate to human existence, for it has its exigencies, to which you must submit, and which it is your duty to fulfil.

But you ought not to make this the sole end of your life; gather the bread which sustains the body, both for yourselves and for your brethren who have none; but seek first the bread of life. Gain the knowledge necessary to develop your intellect, but, above all things, strive to obtain the precious instruction needful to elevate your spirit.

§ 137. How are we to understand Matth. x. 11–13?

Upon entering the house of the just man, the disciples of Jesus invoked the blessings of the Lord, and consequently the protection of the good spirits on him who had received them. But if the human estimate was false, and the man whom his brethren called just was a hypocrite and liar, he might impose on men, but could not deceive God. In such a case the blessings, instead of descending upon him, rested upon him who was worthy. They abandoned the wicked heart to abide with him whose heart was pure.

The just man is he who endeavours to walk in the ways of the Lord, and who uses every effort to abide in them. The just man is he who practises to their full extent the virtues imposed upon man to lead him to God. The just

Digitized by Google

man is he who possesses true charity, who is mild and humble, and hides his words and actions. He is one who humbles himself before men, and even endeavours to humble himself in the secret thoughts of his heart; for if you are charitable and trust in yourselves that you have done a worthy action which very few others would have done, your merit is very slight. The just man is he who is filled with active love, and who returns to the Lord as much as he possibly can of what he has received from him. He supports his brethren, and the wicked as well as the good, for it is equally a charity. The just man is he who does good, without egotism or subsequent regret, not only without expecting the thanks of the grateful or the praise of the indifferent, but even without thinking of the reward which he will receive from the Master. The just man is he who possesses the strong and steadfast faith which nothing can shake, and which is proof against all attacks. Yet such faith is gentle towards others, and does not seek to compel them to come over by force, but seeks to win them gradually by the force of example, and the practice of good works. Such faith should make men say, "Why have I not his faith?" This is the just man before God.

§ 138. What is the meaning of Matth. x. 14, 15?

These words were not only addressed to the disciples of Jesus, but to his disciples of the new era, which was then future. Those to whom the Lord has sent light, and who refuse to receive it, are more guilty than those who are plunged in darkness, and who have received no direct assistance to raise them from it. Do not stay with the former, nor waste your time in preaching to those who are unwilling to listen to you, but bestow your efforts rather on those who are prepared to enter upon the new path.

Your time is precious; go then, and labour always upon the vine of the Lord. It stretches before you like a hedge, bordering the path; but all the shoots are not good. When you have sought to improve those which appear to you to be sterile, and find that they bear no fruit, in spite of your

Digitized by Google

efforts, abandon them; for their time is not yet come; and pass on to others, which under your fostering care shall develop the productive grapes which give strength and life. Do not lose your time. Work with zeal at all times; but march onwards as you work, for you have a long road to travel before reaching your goal.

Yes, at the day of judgment, the land of Sodom and Gomorrha, which typify the guilty spirits plunged in darkness who have had no direct aid to raise them, will be judged with less severity than "that city;" or the guilty and rebellious spirits who have refused to receive the light which the Master has sent them by his disciples; or than those who refuse to receive the light which the Master is still sending by his new disciples, the Apostles of the New Revelation.

It is indeed so; for he who has rejected all the aid which has been given him for his improvement, is a spirit who is hardened in evil; and consequently his trials and expiations will be long and painful. He must endure eternities of suffering corresponding to eternities of faults. That is, he must endure moral suffering and tortures appropriate and proportioned to his faults, and to the degree of his guilt, during the errant state after death, at the close of each successive existence, and must then be incarnated in the lower worlds of trials and expiations, and all this must be repeated over and over again in the case of the rebellious spirit, until he has borne his trials well, and has ceased to rebel against the law of reparation and progress which is designed to purify him until he is fitted to take his place among the good spirits. He is then incapable of evil, and only capable of good. We employed the term eternities in allusion to your expression of eternal punishment, but you will easily perceive that the term is only figurative; for the only eternity that does or can exist is God.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 16–22. LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 11, 12.

Aid granted to the Apostles.

Matth. x. (16) For behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves ;* be therefore wise as serpents, and guileless as doves. (17) But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and will scourge you in their synagogues. (18) And ye shall be brought before rulers and kings on account of me, as a testimony to them and to the nations. (19) And when they deliver you up, do not be anxious about how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. (20) For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. (21) And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child, and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall put them to death. (22) And ye shall be hated by all men on account of my name, but he who abideth until the end shall be saved.

Luke xii. (11) And when ye shall be brought before synagogues and magistracies and authorities, do not be anxious about how or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; (12) For the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that hour what ye ought to say.

§ 139. Although these words of Jesus apply to all ages and to all earnest men, yet they were addressed principally to the Apostles, in view of physical persecutions. They warned them of the fate which awaited them and their imitators, both at that period, and during the ages which should follow the completion of the earthly mission of Christ, until the period when intolerance, fanaticism, ignorance, superstition, proud and greedy ambition, and religious despotism should cease to be supported by rulers and magistrates. Then the secular arm should cease to sacrifice victims by torture and the stake ; and should give place to liberty of conscience in regard to the lives of men, and the right of free inquiry, which is already proclaimed among you, and acknowledged by truly civilized nations.

(Matth. x. 16, 21).—Jesus thus warned the Apostles of the physical persecutions which they would have to undergo,

* After quoting this passage in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. iii., Clement of Rome adds the following words, which are not improbably genuine : "Peter answered and said, What if the wolves shall tear in pieces the sheep ?—Jesus said unto Peter, Let not the sheep fear the wolves after death." Clement then quotes Luke xii. 4, 5 ; but apparently not as forming part of the same passage.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

and of those persecutions which would rise up in the country, in the family, and even in the most secluded corners of the domestic hearth. And you also, Apostles of the New Revelation, must expect to have to struggle against moral, if not against physical persecutions, like all those who arouse the envy of their fellows by being raised above them. Your age is still governed by the love of money, dignities, and honours, material pleasures, superstition, and perverted religion. Generally speaking, therefore, men only envy those around them whom they consider raised above them in a material point of view, by fortune or intelligence in respect to worldly things. But do not deceive yourselves. Sarcasm and ridicule often mask an instinctive feeling of envy; and those who laugh at you feel in their hearts that you are walking more surely than they, and that you will attain the goal sooner.

You have already experienced persecutions, and you will have to experience others.* Firstly, the Scribes and Pharisees of your own age will pursue you with hatred and insult, and bring against you the same charges which the Pharisees of former times brought against Jesus—namely, being in league with the devil, or being charlatans or madmen. Secondly, materialists and unbelievers will mock and ridicule you. Men are so constituted that, rather than make an effort to reach the summit of a mountain, and breathe the pure and invigorating air, they prefer to mine at its foot, at the risk of being crushed by falling rubbish. Consequently, every intelligence above that of the masses, of whatever nature, which is made the instrument of new moral and intellectual truth, and of fresh progress, but which opposes the current human prejudices, ideas, interests, and passions, is exposed to the persecutions of ignorance, cupidity, or pride.

Jesus added, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." In order to ensure the triumph of the divine morality which the Apostles taught, it was needful

* Since this was written, Spiritists and mediums have been subjected to fine and imprisonment, at intervals, both in France and England.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

for them to make use of every means at their command, and yet to preserve their purity of thought and action. You should not imagine, Spiritists, that you must always speak in the same manner to ensure the triumph of your principles. The main art of the preacher and advocate is to adapt his language to the intelligence of those whom he addresses. Consequently, if you confine yourselves to a single undeviating line of conduct, you will succeed with some, and will offend others. Be therefore wise as serpents. You make no victim, and do not harm the unhappy man whom you touch; but you have to deal with proud and susceptible spirits. Advance with prudence, and lead men to admit the force of your arguments, and allure them by your example, in such a manner that when they understand that you seek to win them over, it shall no longer be possible for them to resist the holy influence of practical morality. But in order to attain this end, you should never employ any means but those which gentleness and simplicity permit. Exercise authority over yourselves alone, and let your victims be only those of your boundless love. In this sense, therefore, be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

(Matth. x. 18–20.)—The Apostles were men who had risen from the people, without education or culture. If they had not possessed this confidence in inspiration, they would not have dared to proceed; and their mistrust of themselves would have paralyzed their efforts. But as they were sure of being supported by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they were able to advance boldly against all obstacles. Their latent knowledge became developed, the assistance of the spirits of the Lord strengthened them, and the work which was accomplished was much more striking and remarkable to the masses, as no one knew whence came these men who spoke foreign languages fluently, pleaded their cause and that of their brethren with so much eloquence, and showed knowledge and ability in everything of which no one could have supposed them capable. We do not say that each of them possessed all knowledge, but each possessed special acquirements derived from his preceding existences.

Digitized by Google

They were inspired, clairaudiant, or speaking mediums, according to the circumstances and necessities of their position. When they were inspired, the mechanism of their speech was their own; and the thought alone was given them. When exceptional circumstances made it necessary, they were rendered speaking mediums, and became as it were the instruments of the superior spirits who guided them, and who acted fluidically by the influence of their perisprit upon their organs of speech, and thus controlled them to say what was needful to be said.

But the Apostles were elevated spirits on a mission, and were peculiarly fitted for communion with the superior spirits; and this rendered their medianimity different from yours. Your medianimity has not yet reached its full point of development, which you do not even comprehend.

What happens in some cases to the orator whose language changes under the inspiration of the moment, and who has prepared himself to deal with his subject from one point of view, but finds himself irresistibly drawn to develop it under another? You call it the inspiration of genius; but what is genius; if it is not the inspiration of the spirit who comes to his assistance, and lends him his temporary aid, making him an inspired medium, though frequently unconscious of the spiritual influence which acts upon him? The expressions which Jesus used in speaking to his disciples, "the Holy Spirit," "the Spirit of your Father," signifies the superior spirits; higher intelligences sent by the Father to direct them. These expressions were designed to make them understand the elevated character of inspiration; and as Jesus did not design to reveal the spiritual hierarchy to men, he could only attribute inspiration to its primary source—God, the Father.

The Lord does not inspire men immediately, but he sends his spirits to direct them; and the incarnate spirits who attended Jesus on his mission were spirits who were themselves already elevated, and consequently assisted by still more elevated spirits. Hence the divine inspiration flowed to them more directly. "The Holy Spirit," and "the

Digitized by Google

Spirit of your Father" are, as you know, terms applied to the pure, superior, and good spirits whom the Father sends to guide or to inspire those who are destined to effect the triumph of the truth. Thus the words which Jesus addressed to the Apostles were also applicable to all earnest men who should make themselves the champions of the truth, in faith and humility, both at that time and in future.

You can and have already experienced this support which is lent to the weak when it is necessary for them, not to make them illustrious, or to captivate the attention, but when it is needful to establish an important truth. At the present day, Spiritists, the Holy Spirit will teach you what you ought to say, and the Spirit of your Father speaketh in you, for the Lord sends his good spirits to guide and inspire you, when you speak to men with humility and faith, on behalf of the triumph of truth, and for the propagation of the law of Jesus, and of the New Revelation, which is designed to explain and to develop it.

(Matth. x. 22.)—We say unto you, Spiritists, in the name of Christ: You will be the object of the hatred and insults of men whom interest, pride, and the spirit of domination and intolerance lead to cling to the past, which is crumbling away, but which they vainly desire to uphold. You will also be exposed to the sarcasm and ridicule, and sometimes to the insults of men, whose unbelief, ignorance, sensuality, and material appetites, separate them from the paths of the Lord, and who reject spiritual science and the New Revelation with contempt and prejudice, without sufficient preliminary examination by theoretical and experimental study. You can already estimate the truth of these words. Imitate the disciples of Jesus. The true Spiritist, who is faithful to the voice of the Master, and who, walking in the steps of the Apostles, shall persevere to the end, shall be saved; for he shall take his place among the good spirits according to the degree of purity and elevation which he has acquired.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 23–27. LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 1–3; VI. 39, 40.

Fly from Persecutions—Imitate Jesus—Promise of the New Revelation—Nothing hidden from God—Blind Leaders of the Blind.

Matth. x. (23) But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another, for verily I say unto you, You shall not have finished the cities of Israel until the Son of Man shall come. (24) The pupil is not above his teacher, nor the slave above his lord. (25) It is sufficient for the pupil to be as his teacher, and the slave as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzeboul, how much more shall they call those of his household! (26) Fear them not, therefore, for there is nothing concealed which shall not be revealed, nor hidden which shall not be known. (27) What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim on the housetops.

Luke xii. (1) In the meantime, when there were gathered together myriads of the multitude, so that they trod one upon another, he began to say to his first disciples, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. (2) For there is nothing covered which shall not be revealed, nor hidden, which shall not be known. (3) Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light, and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

Luke vi. (39) And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind guide the blind; shall they not both fall into the ditch? (40) The pupil is not above his master, but every one who is made perfect shall be as his master.

§ 140. The words of Jesus relating to physical persecutions chiefly applied to the Apostles and their imitators, until the time when liberty of conscience and free inquiry should be granted to men without risk of life. The prophecy of the coming of the Son of Man applies to the period which the Lord has appointed to succeed the revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which ushers in the new spiritual era of the Christianity of Christ; and to the new mission of the Apostles and their imitators, which should precede the advent of Jesus, which he predicted during his earthly mission, but under very different circumstances. Consequently these words relate to the present and future throughout all ages.

You should imitate your Leader. The master is not greater than the servant, when the servant raises himself to the elevation of his master. We allude to moral elevation;

Digitized by Google

therefore act like your Master, and practise the morality of Jesus, which will lead you to the summit of eternal happiness.

(Matth. x. 23.)—Those Spiritists who are called upon to propagate the faith, and extend the New Revelation among truly civilized nations, will only have to encounter moral persecutions. In relation to them, these words signify, Do not struggle against obstacles; and if you have rebellious and hardened spirits to deal with, leave them for a time, and turn to others, to reclaim them.

The cities of Israel denote allegorically all the nations of the earth, just as those whom Jesus addressed were spirits who had been purified by time and successive expiations and reincarnations, and were about to fulfil their destiny.

Christ will yet manifest himself to men when the time has come. He holds three missions from the Father; his Father and your Father; his God and your God. The two first are to prepare for the physical progress of your earth, and the physical, moral, and intellectual progress and regeneration of humanity; and the third is to complete his work by leading you to perfection.

He fulfilled the first by his earthly mission, and in the state of an invisible spirit, with the aid of the Holy Spirit; that is of the pure, superior, and good spirits working under his direction. The second is the new era, which is opened before you by the spirit revelation, the era of the Spirit of Truth, who comes to lead the generations of men to truth, to teach them all things, and to announce things to come. This will be effected by his Messiahs, or special envoys, and by errant or incarnate missionaries.

He will come to accomplish the third mission at the appointed time, in the character of the Spirit of Truth, as the completion and sanction of the Truth, to show you the truth without veil. He will then manifest himself to men in all the power and majesty of his perfect and immaculate purity, and surrounded by the pure, superior, and good spirits who have prepared and led you on to the time when you will be at once capable and worthy to receive the Master, and to sustain the Truth without a veil.

Digitized by Google

Yes, everything must be fulfilled. Jesus has trained the infancy of man; now he trains and is about to develop the intelligence of mature age, and in a short time he will come to gather the fruits of his labours, and to receive those of his disciples who shall have profited by his lessons. But do not expect that this will take place immediately; for we do not count by years and ages in eternity, as you count the minutes, hours, days and years, of your human existence.

(Matth. x. 24, 25.)—All social conditions are equal before the eternal Lord, and consequently the master is not above the servant. He alone is most worthy who practises with humility the law of love which is taught you, for only he who practises the Master's morality can be the Master's equal in morality.

Let men clearly understand the principle, object, and consequences of the divine law of reincarnation. It will teach them that human life and the conditions of society are a trial or expiation for each of them. Let them understand that trials and expiations are appropriated by the plurality of existences to the faults committed in previous incarnations, according to the degree of guilt, and with a view to purification and progress. Thus, for example, the harsh and haughty master of yesterday, however exalted or powerful he may have been on earth, either in public or private, but who has failed in his experiences as a master, is the slave, servant, or attendant of the next day. The learned man of yesterday, who was proud or materialistic, and abused his knowledge and intelligence to lead men astray, and to pervert the masses, is the blind man, the idiot, or the madman of the next day. The orator of yesterday, who has gravely abused his eloquence to lead men or nations into great errors, is the deaf mute of the next day. The man of yesterday, gifted with health, strength, and physical beauty, but who gravely abused his faculties, is the sickly, infirm, scrofulous, or deformed sufferer of the next day. The successive bodies are adapted to the trials or expiations to be suffered; and incarnation

Digitized by Google

takes place under the conditions and surroundings requisite for their accomplishment. This will show you why two children of the same family are born into such different and opposite physical, moral, or intellectual conditions, owing to the difference of experiences, and the difference of advancement acquired by previous existences. Let men never forget that the nearest and dearest friend of the past may be, and often is, the stranger or foreigner of the next day, and that they may meet him at any moment, and receive or repulse him.

Let men remember this, and practise the law of love, knowing that human life and the conditions of society are both a trial, and the means of mutual support and assistance in the ways of reparation and progress. Let each share his material or intellectual possessions with others, and let him who gives to a needy brother give his aid freely and cheerfully, whether with his arm, his purse, his intelligence, or his advice, and especially with his example. Then the words of Jesus will be fulfilled in their entire meaning, among a reciprocal and united fraternity, "It is enough for the pupil to be as his teacher, and the servant as his master."

(Luke vi. 39.)—The blind who leads the blind is he who, instead of practising the law of love, and teaching it by word and example to him whom he guides, confines himself exclusively to teaching external and material practice, and binds a thick covering over his pupil's eyes which prevents his perceiving light and truth. They will both fall into the same ditch, and will both be subjected to expiation, but the blind leader of the blind is more guilty than him whom he has misled, and will have more to expiate.

If you would guide your brethren, begin by examining your own conduct, for it should be irreproachable. If you would give advice, begin by practising what you preach, and by abstaining from what you condemn. Then teach the way by walking in it faithfully, without ever turning aside, and you will be one of the disciples of Jesus.

(Luke vi. 40.)—Jesus, the model of all perfection, thus tells you himself that the teacher is not above his pupil, but

Digitized by Google

that the pupil can become the equal of his master. If so, is it not because the pupil shall have followed the traces of the Master without deviating from them, walking step by step in the course opened to him, always following the movements and direction of the leader who guides him? Ought not these words of humility to fill you with encouragement, and the hope of one day acquiring perfect purity, and thus imitating him who was sent to you as the most perfect type of humanity? Ought not this to sustain your courage, renew your strength, and encourage you to march on and on for ever?

(Matth. x. 25.)—These words of Jesus applied in his thought both to the time then present, and to the future, and to yourselves. Jesus was not understood by those who saw his works; and those who endeavour to revive the recollection of them at the present day, and to follow his steps, will be misunderstood at first, like him, and caricatured; but patience and perseverance will triumph over malignity and calumny.

(Matth. x. 26.)—Notwithstanding the efforts of the enemies of the Just One, his sublime doctrine traversed the ages, always increasing in the number of its adherents, though not in their sincerity and practice. Even so, you will attain your end at the present day, whatever efforts are made to oppose your advance. The New Revelation has come to continue the work of Jesus, through the Spirit of Truth, by progressively opening ever wider and wider, space and the future before progressive spirits, and nothing should remain concealed which men ought to know. Man has now reached a point where his knowledge must rapidly increase.

(Luke xii. 1, 2.)—These words of Christ were addressed to all who should become his disciples, especially at the era of the New Revelation. Both your thoughts and actions should always be pure before God. What does it avail you to deceive men by the empty semblance of virtue, if he who probes the heart and reins sees nothing there but hypocrisy? Nothing is concealed from God, and nothing ought to remain hidden from men. Man will read the book

Digitized by Google

unfolded before his eyes, both in the past or future, but he must first be able to comprehend it. Do you give Homer in Greek to a child who can scarcely spell English? Will you ask a man who cannot tell the difference between day and night to predict storms?

You know that the spirits of the Lord should teach you, but you must first be sufficiently intelligent to understand them, and sufficiently advanced in elementary studies to prepare you for classes of philosophy. What you are able to bear is always given to you, and will be progressively given to you as you are able to bear it.

Jesus addressed himself only to a limited number of minds who were capable of comprehending him. He could not have preached his system of morality openly without stupefying his hearers, and as it were paralyzing their good intentions; while his disciples, who were men living among their brethren, could shed the light on different points at once, without so much alarming the feeble spirits whom they addressed.

Jesus spoke only in parables to the multitude, in order to prepare them to receive his instructions without loading them with a burden too heavy for their weakness. If he had preached his sublime morality in clear and precise terms, he would have terrified most of his hearers. When they saw the gulf between their present ideas and the new ones which he offered to them, they would not even have attempted to pass it. The advantage of these parables to Oriental minds was that every man could interpret them in the manner most suitable to himself. Jesus rendered men familiar with the new doctrines, which were still concealed from them, and the disciples were charged to tear gradually away the veils which hid the light from their darkened intelligence, though always under the dominion and veil of the letter.

May the new Apostles of Christ, who are called upon to propagate the New Revelation, imitate the disciples of Jesus! Rend away, one by one, the veils which hide the light from the darkened intelligence of the men of your own age. Have patience and perseverance, and we will help you.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 28–31. LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 4–7.

Fear God alone, for nothing can take place without His will.

Matth. x. (28) And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. (29) Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father? (30) But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. (31) Fear not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke xii. (4) And I say unto you, my friends, Fear not them who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. (5) But I will show you whom you shall fear: fear him who after death hath power to cast into Gehenna; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. (6) Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? (7) But the very hairs of your head are all numbered; fear not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.

§ 141. The language of Jesus was always appropriate to the time, and to the state of intelligence of those on whom he wished to make a deep impression. His disciples were alarmed at the trials and dangers of their mission, and he taught them not to fear men, and to shrink from no danger or persecution proceeding from men, but to fear God only. When he said that two sparrows are sold for a farthing, but that not one of them is forgotten before God, and added, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered; fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows," he inspired them with the boundless confidence which man should feel towards his God. He raised them in their own eyes by teaching that they were of much more importance in the eyes of the Lord than those humble creatures which men despised at that time, because they did not understand that everything proceeds from the same principle and the same will.

Jesus was the first to tell the Hebrews that the omnipotent goodness of God stoops to these humble creatures. He prepared them to understand that although the humanized spirit is, as you say, the lord of creation, nothing in the universe moves or exists or happens except by the supreme will of God, whose paternal eye regards the mite as well as the lord of creation.

Digitized by Google

The words of Jesus were addressed to all men, both in the present and future. They must be explained to you in spirit and in truth; all the errors of the Church have originated in mistaking the letter for the Spirit.

These words were designed to show that the conduct and sentiments of men should be guided by the will of him who rewards and punishes, and whose infinite love watches unceasingly over the least of his creatures. They were also designed to strengthen the confidence which man should feel for his Creator, whose infinite intelligence soars above the universe, perceiving all details in the mass, and yet never viewing the mass apart from the details. In expressing ourselves thus, we wish to make you comprehend the vastness of the gaze of the Creator, who watches over and embraces everything in his infinite gaze, without making any distinction, like you, between the vast Whole of the universe and the thousand details which compose that Whole. Everything in the most secret recesses is unveiled before his eyes; and yet he always beholds the Whole at once.*

(Matth. x. 28; Luke xii. 4, 5.)—The only object of these words in a spiritual sense is to withdraw man from the love of himself, and to fix his attention on that within him which cannot perish. This intelligence is born of God, and proceeds from him; and setting out from the infinitely little to attain the infinitely great, must return to him in individuality and immortality.

Those who have mistaken the letter for the spirit have considered Gehenna to be a material and limited locality; a hell resembling the pagan Tartarus, and like the common cesspool which King Josiah established near Jerusalem, where the Jews threw all the refuse of the city, and corpses to which burial was denied; and where fires were continually kept burning to consume such impurities.

* It may, perhaps, help us to form a better conception of the omniscience of God if we remember that if we raise our eyes to the heavens, we see the fixed stars *at one and the same moment* as they were from three years to thousands of years ago; whereas the intelligence of the First Cause must grasp the universe, as it exists at any given moment, as one vast Whole.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

If we free the spirit from the letter, Gehenna is an allegorical expression with a complex signification. Gehenna is space, where the guilty spirit endures appropriate moral sufferings or tortures, in the errant state, proportioned to the faults or crimes which he has committed. Gehenna also means the primitive and other inferior worlds of trials and expiations, to which guilty spirits are condemned by incarnation or re-incarnation. Both soul and body dwell there, in a state which is a Gehenna to the guilty spirit, just as the sufferings of the errant state are a Gehenna.

Do not fear men, and when it is needful to sacrifice your body for the safety of your soul, do not tremble before those who kill the body, and can do no more; but fear God, who can cast you after death, if you fail in your trials, into the Gehenna of moral suffering in the errant state, or into the Gehenna of reincarnation on the earth, or on other inferior worlds of trials and expiations; for it is thus that he exerts his justice for your improvement and progress.

Man should only regard his body as a covering, and as the means of the purification of his spirit by trials and expiations. Consequently, if there is any danger of the divine emanation which inhabits the body, the soul, being lost or even injured, man should sacrifice his perishable envelope without regret. The spirit proceeds from the Lord, and owes its existence to him, and is only worthy in his eyes by its nearness to himself. It is the guardian of its envelope, and should preserve it from all stains; but if it is called upon to choose between the loss of the purity of its spirit and the loss of its body, it should sacrifice its body to preserve the purity of its soul. If, in any danger, the life of the body is set against that of the spirit, or if the spirit is called upon to choose between purity and progress, and the guilt which would lead it into moral death, let it allow the vase to be broken to permit the spirit to escape, and ascend like a fragrant perfume to the feet of its Creator.

(Matth. x. 29; Luke xii. 6.)—Is not God the Infinite Goodness whose gaze embraces all his creatures in one glance? Is he not the Omnipotent Will which controls the

Digitized by Google

universe? And does not everything which happens take place by his permission?

Nevertheless, do not imagine that his infinite greatness stoops to all the details of your insignificant existence, but his power directs all things, and the spirits who watch over the arrangements of the worlds from their formation, even to the minutest details, only act according to the superior impulse which they have received, and which is communicated from one to another until it reaches yourselves. It may thus be said that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His will.

Do not imagine that this explanation compromises your free-will in any sense. The action of the spirits who work under the powerful guidance of the Sovereign Master in nowise affects this prerogative of all spirits, whether incarnate or not. Free-will is the divine eternal emanation of the Lord, which he entrusts to all his creatures. It is the sacred fire which we ought to train to give an account of itself at the great Source whence it was drawn.

(Matth. x. 30.)—If these words of Jesus were interpreted literally, they would lead to the negation of free-will, and to fatalism; but they are allegorical. Man is free to perform an action or not; but the principles and consequences of this action are regulated by the immutable and eternal laws of Nature, which his act calls into operation. Nothing happens to man which has not been foreseen by the infinite wisdom of the Lord, who, nevertheless, permits the events of human life to take an orderly course, according to the use which man makes of his free-will. Although man is accessible to secret good and evil influences, which are incessantly striving to act upon him, and is forced to struggle between good and evil, he nevertheless possesses free-will; his own personal will: and in virtue of this he possesses the faculty of doing good or evil. After his death everything is taken account of in his thoughts, words, and actions, whether good or evil.

The infinite love of the Lord watches unceasingly over his creatures, and whatever happens to man during his

Digitized by Google

earthly existence, the care of the Lord is extended over him, through his good spirits. Not an act of his life nor a secret thought of his heart escapes him, and when the hour of reckoning has come he will be sure to find the page exactly filled up in his book of life. The Lord never abandons any of his children, and he never forgets any good action, and never leaves any evil action unpunished.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 32–36. LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 8, 9, 49–53.

Jesus came not to bring peace, but a sword.

Matth. x. (32) Therefore every one whomsoever who shall acknowledge me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father who is in the heavens. (33) And whoever shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in the heavens. (34) Do not think that I came to send peace on earth; I am not come to send peace but a sword. (35) For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a bride against her mother-in-law. (36) And a man's enemies shall be those of his own household.

Luke xii. (8) Verily I say unto you, Every one who shall acknowledge me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. (9) And he who shall deny me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. (49) I am come to send fire upon the earth, and what do I desire but that it should be already kindled. (50) And I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I distressed until it shall be ended! (51) Think ye that I came to give peace on earth? Nay, verily, I tell you, but rather division. (52) For from henceforward, five in one house shall be divided, three against two, and two against three. (53) The father shall be divided against his son, and the son against the father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother, the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

§ 142. These words of Jesus are plain enough in themselves, and have been verified by experience.

(Matth. x. 32, 33; Luke xii. 8, 9.)—He who follows the divine law which Jesus revealed to men, with simplicity of heart and humility of mind, in truth, good works, love, and fraternity, confesses Jesus, and therefore follows the path which alone leads to salvation. Jesus, the divine model for men to copy, leads the obedient man who has thus chosen the right path to the goal.

But he who follows opposite courses, and falls into the ways of pride, selfishness, and hypocrisy, and the other vices

Digitized by Google

and passions which debase humanity, wanders from the goal. He renounces the Good Shepherd by misunderstanding his law and doctrine, and the Good Shepherd cannot admit him among the good spirits, or present him to the King of Kings. He is then denied until he has acknowledged Christ by returning to his path, and practising the sublime morality of which he is the personification.

(Luke xii. 49, 50.)—Jesus came to send fire upon the earth, for the backward men of the age at which he fulfilled his earthly mission were in the bondage of abuses, prejudices, and traditions, which his doctrine was intended to supersede, and which were upheld by the Scribes and Pharisees, and the proud and avaricious priests. He wished that the fire of the teaching and example of faith, hope, disinterested abnegation and devotion, and of love and charity, should be kindled. He wished that men should gather round him to practise his teaching and example, and to disseminate it among the multitude. He expressed his ardent desire to receive the baptism with which he must be baptized, and to sanctify his mission by his crucifixion, which should cause it to bring forth fruits for all, and should prepare for the future advent of the New Revelation.

(Luke xii. 51–53.)—As Jesus brought progress to backward spirits, he provoked a conflict between those who wished to enter upon the new path, and the idle or hardened spirits who wished to remain stationary. He foresaw the divisions which would arise among men, even in the family circle, in the course and fulfilment of progress. It has been and must still be thus; therefore be prepared; for if you were all ripe at the time of harvest, it would be useless to make a selection among you, and to bring you the rays of this living light to complete the ripening of the harvest, upon which the spirits of the Lord are at work.

(Matth. x. 34, 35.)—Jesus foresaw future events, and the hatred and enmity which would arise even among the nearest of kin, and under the same roof. He foresaw the blood which would be shed in his name; and foresaw how badly his law and doctrine would be comprehended in the

Digitized by Google

future, and how it would be perverted by the substitution of a false and blind law for the love, charity, and fraternity which he had proclaimed to men, as including all that they had to do with the Law and the Prophets. He foresaw the massacres, and the bloody and fratricidal struggles which would arise in his name among men to whom he had said, "You are all brethren." He foresaw the tortures, and the *auto-da-fés* which would be kindled in his name by intolerance, fanaticism, superstition, and dominant ambition.

Yes, from the first martyr to the day of universal peace, which is yet to come, Jesus took account of all the torrents and blood which would be shed. These are evils no doubt, for they show how backward the spirits of your world were and still are; but they are necessary evils, for blood gives birth to regeneration. Does not the actual state of things show you that the universal peace which should reign on earth is still far from shedding its civilizing benefits upon you?

During the era of the New Revelation which is opening before you, the spirits of the Lord, like Jesus on his earthly mission, are come to send fire on the earth, and not to bring peace, but division. In truth, Spiritism is still the presence of Jesus among you, and it is still his influence which urges man to progress, and opens up a path which will lead him more quickly to it. Finally, when the Master shall come to separate the darnel from the wheat, and to complete the work upon which we are engaged, there will still be division among you, for whatever progress you may have made, there will still be backward spirits. There is thus always division among men, which will stimulate progress until the day when Jesus shall have finished his work, and completed this separation; when all the rebellious and wilfully blind spirits shall have been cast down to worlds where they can purify themselves. Then only will the mission of Christ become a mission of peace. After having hitherto been the king of justice, he will then be king of peace.

Use all your efforts, Spiritists, to hasten the arrival of

Digitized by Google

the new era by smoothing away the difficulties which are met with on all sides. Work ardently to clear away the weeds which choke the vine of the Lord; enlighten the darkened intelligences, and sustain the weak, and aid your brethren to attain the same point as yourselves, that all may see the light, and be equally enlightened.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 37–39. LUKE, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 25–27.

Family Love—Duty to be accomplished before all things—Patience and Resignation in worldly trials.

Matth. x. (37) He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (38) And he who does not take up his cross, and follow me, is not worthy of me. (39) He who would gain his life shall lose it, and he who shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.

Luke xiv. (25) And great crowds went with him, and he turned to them, and said, (26) If any one cometh unto me, and does not hate his own father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. (27) And whoever does not lift up his cross, and follow me, cannot be my disciple.

§ 143. These verses have often been commented upon, but have been misunderstood by those who were unable to make allowance for the epoch, the surroundings, and the intelligence of those to whom Jesus spoke. They have stopped at the letter without seeking for the spirit, and have been misled by expressions which have less force in Hebrew, and which the translators have rendered inaccurately.*

You must first endeavour to understand the true spiritual meaning of these words of Jesus, and the lesson which they were designed to teach. Man should have no other personal interest than the future of his spirit, and if any human tie is liable to turn him aside from the path which he ought to follow, he should break it.

But do not suppose that Jesus intended to preach selfish mysticism and indifference—far from that. Man may love

* It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that Jesus did not speak Greek, and that the Greek Gospels themselves do not give us his exact words.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

God above all things, and yet, moved by the strongest motives, which are really identical, fulfil all the obligations imposed on him by his duties to his family, whatever differences of opinion may divide the father from his son, or the mother from her daughter. Man can and ought to fulfil all his human duties with the most scrupulous exactness. But Jesus desires that you should never permit any feeling whatsoever of favour or human interest to make you false to the law of love which he came to preach. Do not commit any unworthy action to please any one whom you love on earth, for then you deny your Master, who will deny you in his turn.

(Matth. v. 37.)—He who commits an action contrary to the teachings of Jesus, to please father, mother, son, or daughter, is unworthy of him, and cannot be his disciple. Jesus is the personification of his moral doctrine, and consequently of faith. Could this pattern of love condemn family affection? You cannot think so; but he spoke of its abuse. However strong may be the affection which a man feels for those near and dear to him, it should never lead him to commit any culpable action, for if some were held to be excused by their motives, many others would believe themselves to be absolved from the guilt of a bad action the moment they could shelter themselves behind the plea of devotion to their family.

Jesus practised the commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother," as a lesson in the eyes of men; but he also reminded them that he must fulfil his duty above all things. Remember the reply which he gave to Mary when she and Joseph returned to Jerusalem in search of him, and found him in the Temple among the learned men (vol. i. § 47, pp. 84–86).

(Matth. x. 39; Luke xiv. 27).—He who does not accept the trials which he meets with during his human life, with resignation and even with gratitude, cannot be the disciple of Jesus. Jesus accepted them by way of teaching and example to men, for he was not obliged to suffer any. Therefore every one should submit to his trials for his own advancement.

(Matth. x. 39).—Jesus addressed these words to his

Digitized by Google

disciples as a caution. He desired to teach them that, whoever should fail in his mission, and abandon the accomplishment of his work to save his human life, should lose his spiritual life; whereas he who did not shrink from death, and suffered it in the fulfilment of his work, would gain eternal life.

In a more general manner, and with reference to all ages and to all men, these words expressed the thought that the life of the spirit is the only real existence. But if, during incarnation, the spirit commits a guilty action to preserve his body, he loses his spiritual life, because he will be obliged to recommence his trials in a new incarnation; whereas he who sacrifices his body when failure in his trials was otherwise inevitable, will receive the reward of the trials which he has thus successfully surmounted, in a better world.

(Luke xiv. 26).—The word hate is a stronger expression than that used by Jesus himself. Jesus sowed seed to germinate in a dry and infertile soil. Do you suppose that he could have spoken to the men of that age, and especially to the Hebrews, in such terms as you would use now? And do you suppose that some centuries hence, your descendants will find nothing to object to in words which you now accept with admiration?

Do not try to throw the clothing of one nation over the shoulders of another. Let each retain his defects, and what is fitting for him. You pretend to admire the ancient authors; and you permit their mode of speech to pass current, although it is so different to your own; but yet you do not like this to have been the case at the time when Jesus appeared among you! Nor did he speak to learned men who were accustomed to the elegancies and refinements of language, but to a backward, material, and hardened race, who needed strong language and striking examples before they could comprehend. It was only the abuse of family affection which Jesus condemned in these words; for this is injurious and misleading to man above all things. Man should devote himself to his family, and zealously fulfil all his duties; but

Digitized by Google

he should not make a religion of it. He should not sacrifice the interests or happiness of those who are equally his brethren in the sight of God, to his love for his relatives; for this would be a species of selfishness. Jesus was filled with love and devotion for all, and used expressions which were calculated to impress his hearers more strongly, that he might release them from this selfishness, and lead them to comprehend that the future of the spirit is the only interest which man should feel, and that the true disciple of Jesus should never allow family affection, or the desire of preserving his human life, to lead him into any action contrary to the teachings of the Master, and to the moral doctrine of which he is the personification.

LUKE, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 28–33.

Reflect before Acting.

(28) For what man among you, wishing to build a tower, does not first sit down to calculate the expense, and whether he has sufficient to complete it? (29) Lest having laid the foundation, and not being able to finish it, all the beholders begin to mock him, saying, (30) This man began to build, and is not able to finish. (31) And what king, marching out to make war against another king, does not first sit down to consider whether he is able with ten thousand to encounter him who is marching against him with twenty thousand? (32) And if not, while he is still far off, he sends an embassy to ask for peace. (33) Thus, therefore, every one of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.

§ 144. (Verses 28–30).—Before entering upon a new course, you ought to be sure that you have sufficient energy and strength of will to persevere in it. It is not good for a man to stop short when he has begun to follow the path of progress. When he is freed from his earthly envelope, he will perceive that he has lost his time, and will bitterly regret it, for he will perceive what progress he might have made by persevering, and how much still remains to be done; for indecision only increases the difficulty.

(Verses 31 and 32).—Let no one attempt great things, unless he has the requisite strength. Let him wait and train himself, and study and work to improve himself, rather than waste his time in fruitless efforts.

Digitized by Google

(Verse 33).—In order to follow the path of progress and universal charity, you must detach yourselves from material objects, and regard them only as a means of benefiting and relieving your brethren. To renounce what you have does not mean that you should throw it away or squander it, but that, instead of attaching yourself to it, you should only value it for the good which it may enable you to accomplish.

MATTHEW, CHAP. X.—VERSES 40–42; XI. 1.

He who fulfils the law of Love and Charity will be rewarded.

x. (40) He who receiveth you receiveth me, and he who receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. (41) He who receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. (42) And whoever shall give but a cup of cold water to one of the least of these, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall by no means lose his reward. (xi. 1.) And when Jesus had finished appointing his twelve disciples, he sent them thence to teach and preach in their own cities.

§ 145. Let us sum up the meaning of these words, which Jesus designed to encourage his followers both at that time and in future. He who has faith in God, and who endeavours to fulfil the law of love and charity, keeping eternal life in view, will obtain the reward of the faithful.

Verse 40 was addressed to the Apostles: "He who receives your teachings, receives mine; and he who receives mine, receives the teaching of Him that sent me."

Verse 41 is figurative. He who acts from a praiseworthy motive will receive the reward of his intention.

You may regard verse 42 as a lesson to all men. The good which you do is always accounted to you, no matter how unimportant the action, or how mean the person whom you assist or relieve.

LUKE, CHAP. X.—VERSES 1–12, 16.

Mission of the Seventy Disciples.

(1) And after these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face, into every city and place where

Digitized by Google

he was about to come. (2) Then he said to them, The harvest is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he should send labourers to his harvest. (3) Go forth; behold I send you as sheep into the midst of wolves. (4) Carry neither purse nor scrip nor sandals, and salute no one by the way. (5) And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. (6) And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; but if not, it shall return to you. (7) And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they offer, for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Do not pass from house to house. (8) And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat what they set before you. (9) And heal the sick among them, and say unto them, The kingdom of God has come nigh unto you. (10) And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go out into its streets, and say, (11) Even the dust of your city, which cleaveth to us, do we wipe off against you; but know ye this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. (12) But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in that day than for that city. (16) He who receiveth you, receiveth me; and he who rejecteth you, rejecteth me; and he who rejecteth me, rejecteth Him that sent me.

§ 146.—The instructions which Jesus gave the Seventy Disciples are the same as he gave to the Apostles. We have already explained verses 2 and 3 (§ 122), and verses 3-12 (§ 124 to 132), and need not reconsider them. Nevertheless, there are some special points which we must mention here.

Jesus said to the Seventy Disciples: "Salute no man by the way." You must seek for the Spirit beneath the letter. These words imply: Do not go out of your way or stop short; pursue your end until you have attained it.

By "the son of peace" (verse 6), Jesus meant men who were disposed to follow the new path, which would lead them more rapidly in the way of the Lord. The peace of the Disciples is to be understood in the same sense. It implies their faith and knowledge, which would stand them in good stead whenever they found themselves among unfriendly surroundings.

"Do not pass from house to house." Jesus thus recommends his disciples to persevere, as they would thus obtain results which would be lost by too frequent changes.

(Verse 7.)—The disciples of Jesus dispensed food for the spirit, and received food for the body. Man does not live by the spirit only, and must submit to the necessities of the

Digitized by Google

body; but the disciples stopped to fulfil a need, and freely gave what they had freely received. This is a very different thing from the demands of men who call themselves disciples of Jesus and successors of the Apostles, and who, on pretence that the labourer is worthy of his hire, traffic in the things of God by taking payment for their prayers, while they seek after wordly prosperity, effeminacy, luxury, and the feasting of life. They live thus at the expense of their brethren, and uselessly appropriate the daily bread of many families. Every man who would become a disciple of Jesus, whether priest or father, Jew or Gentile, should seek for what he needs, but never for luxury. If a man seeks for more than he requires, he ceases to be a disciple of the Master, who when on earth taught men, both by preaching and example, to practise humility, disinterestedness, self-denial, devotion, charity, and love towards their brethren.

(Verse 16.)—This applies to the Apostles and chosen Disciples, who always acted with the aid of the Holy Spirit, or the superior spirits, who constantly accompanied them on their mission. They faithfully echoed the teachings of their Master. They repeated and practised them, and thus taught their brethren to whom they were sent, both by preaching and example. Men have used these words to claim the right of life and death over the soul. They did not understand that no one entrusts a labourer with work that he is unable to accomplish; and that it does not follow that because the father is skilful, the son should be equally so. When Jesus sent his chosen disciples to spread his Gospel, and to bless or improve, he did not give the right to any one who wished to assume it, and although a stranger might cast out demons in his name, it was always necessary that his name should be invoked with ardent faith, humility, love, and charity.

Jesus said to his disciples, Go and carry my Gospel into all the towns and villages. Go to preach the good news, for the torch of truth is put into your hands. Kindle all intelligences at its ardent fires. Let the light beam forth,

Digitized by Google

but woe to those who refuse to recognize it, for the darkness around them will grow still denser. Do not condemn those who repulse you, but shake off the dust of your feet. That is, leave them, without accepting anything from them, not even the dust which has gathered on your feet. Their lot will be heavier than that of Sodom and Gomorrha, for you offered them the light, and they closed their eyes; and you gave them words of peace, and they closed their ears against them.

Those who have applied the command of the Master to bind and loose to themselves, have forgotten that he desired them not to take two coats, or two pair of shoes. In this case, as in all others, each took only what he required, without troubling himself about anything more.

When Jesus gave this power to his disciples, he forbade them at the same time to think of their personal welfare. He forbade them either to receive anything in return for their instructions and prayers, or to give themselves up to any kind of self-indulgence.

How have those acted who have interpreted or applied the Master's words to themselves? How have they dared to transgress his wishes on this point, from the time that they believed themselves heirs of the powers which Jesus conferred on his disciples? They have passed their lives in sloth and luxury, binding and loosing from the elevation of their throne, and preaching self-denial and abstinence from the midst of luxury and abundance. They have washed the feet of some poor wretches, and (in their humility) have allowed their own to be kissed.

Shame on the man who does not understand that the only way to fill a throne is to base it on the example of an austere and humble life, by trying to follow the steps of Christ in everything, and to imitate his Apostles and Disciples by practising the lessons and the moral doctrine of the Master! How much greater would have been the power of those who call themselves the successors of the Apostles, how much more persuasive would have been their words, and how much more would they have been listened to,

Digitized by Google

obeyed, and respected, if they had preached by their own example the virtues that they recommended with their lips, in mockery of the poor, to whom they preach renunciation of worldly wealth! But our present task does not lie in this direction, for sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. The virtues which will attract men will seat themselves one day, active and benevolent, on the summit of the mountain.

Only those who endeavour to follow the steps of Christ in everything, and imitate his Apostles and Disciples by seriously practising the Master's words, teachings, and moral doctrine which they profess, are entitled, no matter whether priests or laymen, Jews or Gentiles, to call themselves Disciples of Jesus, and heirs of the Apostles, and apply his words to themselves (verse 16).

At the present day these words apply especially to the new disciples of Jesus who are called upon to proclaim the New Revelation under the guidance and inspiration of the spirits of the Lord, and to preach and develop the law, teachings, and morality of Christ in spirit and in truth. Be, therefore, the true descendants and successors of the Apostles, by walking constantly in their steps, and by the constant practice of duty and virtue; and never permit the white robe of your soul to be soiled by any impurity.

LUKE, CHAP. X.—VERSES 17–20.

Return of the Seventy Disciples.

(17) And the Seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in thy name. (18) And he said unto them, I beheld Satan falling like lightning from heaven. (19) Behold I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. (20) But do not rejoice for this, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in the heavens.

§ 147. Verse 18 is figurative. Whenever you struggle with any form of evil in the interests of universal love and progress, the evil will be cast into the bottomless pit, and its fall will serve to enlighten you. Whenever you venture on an unknown and difficult path, with a view to the progress of humanity and the good of your brethren,

Digitized by Google

advance bravely. The venomous reptiles upon which you tread will not raise their malevolent heads, or turn against you; your foot will crush them, and they will slink away in shame at their defeat. The Lord protects those who work zealously at the work which he has given them to do.

Never feel any pride in what the Lord permits you to accomplish. Let it be your only aim and ambition to gain the promised reward. Rejoice if your labours allow you to hope for it, but be not vain. Those who walk sincerely in the ways of the Lord may rejoice, for their names are written in heaven. The Master always grants the labourer his hire; and if you feel that your works are good, you also feel that you will receive the reward. You may all experience the same joy as the Master's disciples, for he sends you also to labour at the work, and you will succeed in everything you endeavour to accomplish in his name with confidence and sincerity, with the sole object of aiding in the progress of humanity.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 2–6. LUKE, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 18–23.

John sends his Disciples to Jesus.

Matth. xi. (2) And John hearing in the prison the works of Christ, sent two of his disciples, (3) And said to him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? (4) And Jesus answered and said to them, Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. (5) The blind see, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. (6) And blessed is he who shall not be offended in me.

Luke vii. (18) And John's disciples related all these things to him. (19) And John summoned two of his disciples, and sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he who should come, or do we look for another? (20) And the men came to him, and said, John the Baptist sent us to thee, saying, Art thou he who should come, or do we look for another? (21) And in that hour he cured many of diseases and scourges and evil spirits, and gave sight to many blind. (22) And Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and relate to John what ye have seen and heard. The blind see, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them. (23) And he is blessed whoever shall not be offended in me.

§ 148. John had heard rumours of the actions of Jesus, but was not certain if it was really him whose coming he

Digitized by Google

had heralded. He had heard reports of a man named Jesus, but as he might be only a skilful impostor, he sent two of his disciples to him to assure himself of his indentity.

Jesus said, "Unto the poor the Gospel is preached." These words were spoken rather with a view to the present than to the future. The poor were neglected and uncared for. Nobody troubled himself about them; and Jesus spoke thus with a view to relieve this miserable class, that they also might share in the intellectual progress of humanity. If you regard the expression "the poor" in a general sense as applying to all ages, the words imply, "The Gospel is preached to all," whoever they are, who desire to hear it, and feel the need of benefiting by its teachings. Jesus added, "Happy is he who shall not be offended in me." Whoever rejects the morality of Christ, rejects Christ. Happy is he who accepts his precepts, and practises them; for he progresses, and need not fear to be rejected.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 7–15. LUKE, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 24–30; CHAP. XVI.—VERSE 16.

Mission of John.

Matth. xi. (7) And when they were gone, Jesus began to say to the crowds, about John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (8) But what went ye out to see? A man wearing soft garments? Behold, they who wear soft clothing are in the houses of the kings. (9) But what went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and one greater than a prophet. (10) For this is he of whom it was written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. (11) Verily, I say unto you, Among those who are born of women there hath not arisen one greater than John the Baptist, but the least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he. (12) And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of the heavens suffereth violence, and the violent seize it by force. (13) For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. (14) And if ye wish to accept it, this is Elijah who should come. (15) He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Luke vii. (24) And when the messengers of John had departed, he began to say to the multitudes about John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (25) But what went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they who wear fine clothing, and live in luxury, are in royal palaces. (26) But what went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and one greater than a prophet. (27) This is he of whom it is written, Behold

Digitized by Google

I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. (28) For I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there is no greater prophet than John the Baptist, but the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. (29) And when all the people and the tax-gatherers heard this, they justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. (30) But the Pharisees and the lawyers disregarded the will of God, not having been baptized by him.

Luke xvi. (16) The law and the prophets were until John; from that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every one presses into it.

§ 149. Jesus thus gave his testimony to the mission which John had already accomplished, and announced his new and future mission. He thus laid the foundation-stone of the edifice of regeneration, which is rising, although but slowly. The bodily and corporeal appearance of Jesus to the eyes of men is pointed out to you as the foundation of the future progress of his ideas. They are winning their way very gradually, but they are laying aside the material covering which hampered them, and they are rising more and more towards spiritual regions. We are working at the continuation and completion of the great work of Jesus, under the eyes and the direction of the Master.

(Matth. xi. 9, 10.)—Jesus expresses himself thus because John was an advanced spirit, and more elevated than the prophets. If you estimate the ages which had passed since the period of Elijah, you will understand that in making a comparison between the time when the prophets had appeared and the time when Elijah was reincarnated as the forerunner of Christ, a vast amount of progress must have taken place. At the present time Elijah will yet be more than the Elijah of the Hebrews. When he shall accomplish his spiritual mission, his passage on your earth will not be manifested by austerity of mind and habits, but by power and science.

Nothing is stationary in creation, and moral progress stops only in the bosom of God. It continues to advance until the moment when it reaches its final limit, by the moral progress acquired at the feet of the Eternal; but intellectual progress, or universal knowledge, is indefinite; and when the spirit has become perfect he derives it directly from God, whom, however, he can never equal.

Digitized by Google

(Matth. xi. 11.)—In speaking thus, Jesus desired to make a strong impression upon the material and backward men to whom he spoke; and by representing John as so great on earth, and yet inferior to the least in the kingdom of God, to lead them to aspire towards this kingdom, and to desire to attain it by hearing and remembering the words spoken by the Baptist and the Master, and by following the paths which were thus pointed out to them.

The difference made between John incarnate and John as a spirit relates to the bondage of matter. No matter how elevated the spirit, it always suffers from the influence of the body which confines it; and therefore the Lord does not judge the actions of his children by the same measure that you do. You often cry anathema for human faults which arise from the organization of the machine, and close your eyes to the far more serious faults arising from wanderings of the spirit. John humanized was naturally less than John as a spirit, and when Jesus made a comparison between him and the least in the kingdom of the heavens, he desired to teach men the difference between the free spirit and the spirit imprisoned in a body. Jesus also affirmed, indirectly, and under a veil which was to be raised by the New Revelation, that he himself was superior to John, and above humanity.

(Matth. xi. 12.)—These words are figurative, and were designed to teach the Hebrews that those who only pretended to attain the kingdom of the heavens were incapable of entering it; but the guilty spirit never enjoyed, and never will enjoy, celestial happiness as long as he remains unchanged. Jesus said, "The violent take it by force," because the Scribes and Pharisees only pretended to attain the peace of the Lord by ostentatiously performing a law which they broke in their hearts; and when they arrogated to themselves all the favours of God, did they not take the eternal dwelling by force, to the eyes of the ignorant multitude? They made no real effort or attempt to attain it. Most of them resembled your philosophers, your strong-minded men, and your professed believers, who believe in nothing.

Digitized by Google

They misled the multitude, claimed for themselves the honours and profits of the world, and also usurped the happiness and peace of heaven, as it seemed to their poor blind dupes.

"For all the prophets and the law prophesied till John;" and no one has listened to the prophecies. No one has really sought to win the celestial home, although all have usurped it in thought.

The tax-gatherers were the inferior officials who obeyed the chiefs of the synagogue, received taxes, and performed those offices which brought public odium upon them. They were among the humblest, and received the word of John, and consequently the baptism of penitence, with the bulk of the people. The Pharisees were the proud sectaries who followed the most difficult ordinances of Moses with the sole object of showing their superiority to other men. The doctors of the law were those who loaded burdens on the shoulders of other men, which they themselves would not attempt to lift with one of their fingers. The Pharisees and doctors of the law took refuge in their pride, and rejected the word of John. They rejected the favour which God had designed for them by disregarding the opportunity which he had given them of entering upon the true path which leads to him. The baptism was an emblem, but the word of John was the means.

(Luke xvi. 16.)—This is a figurative expression, implying that no one seriously attempts to do what is needful for success. The kingdom of God is preached from John to your own days; but like those to whom Jesus spoke, everyone endeavours to make himself a kingdom of the earth, and to seize the kingdom of heaven by violence, or, in other words, make it a means of success by hypocrisy or anathema; but no one endeavours to penetrate into it, and to dwell there.

(Matth. xi. 14, 15.)—Jesus said this to call special attention to his words, both in the present and in future, as containing a hidden meaning; for Elijah, who was to come, had already come. Jesus was gifted with prescience,

Digitized by Google

and all future ages were unrolled before his eyes. These words should attract your attention now, as they did when they were spoken. All those who have begun the work must complete it. Do not suppose that John has ceased to work for the progress of your planet and its humanity, since his earthly mission as the Forerunner of Christ. He still continues his task, and his mission of Forerunner, in the spiritual world.

Now, that the new era opens before you to prepare and fulfil the advent of Jesus, the Spirit of Truth, as the completion and sanction of the Truth, he still comes to prophesy among you in the state of a spirit. Open your ears and hearts even to-day to his preaching, and listen to Elijah, who cries again to the people, the tax-gatherers, the Scribes and Pharisees, and the doctors of the law of your own days, and to all men, "Repent, repent, for the hour of judgment is at hand. Death may strike you at any moment, and deliver over your guilty spirit to expiation in the errant state, and then to the anguish and pain of reincarnation. The hour of judgment approaches, for the time is not far distant when your planet shall be submitted to purification by the separation of the wicked from the good, and when the spirits who have remained till then guilty, rebellious, and wilfully blind, will be cast down to the inferior worlds, where they will have to expiate their offences for long ages. Awake, awake, lest you be taken by surprise, and purify yourselves, for robbers endeavour to press into the celestial dwelling, and none will be received into it but the elect. You are all called upon to be the elect, for the Lord knows nothing of the elect and reprobate, according to your false human interpretations. Nothing impure can approach him; and the elect cannot and do not signify any but pure spirits; and spirits cannot attain to purity and perfection without passing through all the degrees of progress which lead to the summit. Therefore purify yourselves, for you may all become pure and perfect; and then, and then only, will you be of the elect, and attain to the heavenly home by approaching the Fire of Omnipotence."

Digitized by Google

Elijah—John the Forerunner—will yet reappear among you. His presence will be the signal for immense progress, both in morality and science. His future mission will be to enlarge the circle of your ideas and knowledge, by strengthening in you universal love, and the charity which flows from it.

We are not permitted to tell you the exact period when these things will be accomplished, but the time is approaching, and we refer you to what we have said in § 2, vol. i. p. 8. When you can trace the life of a man from his earliest infancy, step by step to the furthest limits of his life, without ever finding any spot or weakness in him ; when he can raise his pure forehead to heaven without ever having had to blush for any bitter recollection ; when his lips shall preach a morality to you which will be sanctioned by all his actions, even the most secret ; then you may say : "This is a superior spirit on a mission ;" and if such types of character become frequent among you, you may say : "The moment is approaching when the Forerunner shall come to announce the good news to us, and to prepare us to enter upon the spiritual life which will enable us worthily to receive the messenger of the Lord ; Jesus, the Spirit of Truth, coming as the completion and fulfilment of the Truth." Then will phenomena be repeated upon your planet similar to that of the appearance of Jesus on his earthly mission, by purely perispritic, though tangible incorporation, under a bodily human appearance.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 16–19. LUKE, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 31–35.

John and Jesus only comprehended by the Children of the Lord.

Matth. xi. (16) But to what shall I compare this generation ? It is like little children sitting in the market places, and they call to their companions, and say : (17) We have played the flute to you, and you have not danced ; we have wailed to you, and you have not lamented. (18) For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon. (19) The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, the friend of tax-gatherers and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Digitized by Google

Luke vii. (31) And the Lord said, To what shall I compare the men of this generation? And what do they resemble? (32) They are like little children sitting in the market-place, and they call to others, and say, We have played the flute to you, and you have not danced; we have wailed to you, and you have not lamented. (33) For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and ye say, He hath a demon. (34) The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, the friend of tax-gatherers and sinners. (35) And Wisdom is justified by all her children.

§ 150. Jesus thus, in language appropriate to the men whom he addressed, taught them how their rebellious minds rejected all evidence seeking for any explanation for his mission except the goodness of God, and not even yielding to the evidence which he offered them.

"But wisdom is justified of her children." These words applied to the future of the men who had seen, but had not comprehended. Centuries have developed their spirits, and you understand better now. The wise, the children of Jesus, are those who understand truths that the blind have rejected.

(Matth. xi. 18.)—John the Baptist dwelt apart from men. His abstemious life astonished the Hebrews, who sacrificed everything to their material appetites. The people wondered at the retired life of contemplation and abstinence which he imposed upon himself; and as they could not understand how any man could willingly choose such a life, they thought he was driven into the desert by an obsessing spirit. But John fulfilled his mission by teaching and example, as the commencement of the penitence of which the baptism on the banks of the Jordan was to be the emblem; while his preaching prepared men to enter into the paths of the Lord.

(Matth. xi. 19.)—Jesus, on the other hand, lived among men, to exhibit love and charity towards all. He familiarized the virtues which he preached, that they might be better understood. He practised them among the outcast classes, to show proud men that their first duty is to help those who are, or whom they believe to be, inferior to themselves. He ate, as it appeared to men, at the table of the poor man, whom he taught to enjoy the true flavour of his bread; he slept, to human eyes, under the tax-gatherer's

Digitized by Google

roof, to show him the calm which springs from a pure conscience; he sailed with fishermen to inspire them with a contempt for death, based on faith and on eternity; he lived the life of a poor man among men, but not with the proud; and the proud accused him of finding pleasure in the lowest society of the period.

Are you altered, you who repeat the words of Jesus, that he is not come to heal those who are well, to save those who are not lost, or to encourage those who do not despair?

Are you altered? Are you ready to enter the hut of the tax-gatherer, and to sit down at his table, that he may forget the difference between you, and see only a man like himself, but wiser and better, and be ready to receive the lessons of probity and disinterestedness which you can give him? Are you ready to hold out your hand to those who have been living a bad life, and to say to them, "Brethren, you are following a bad course: come and lean on me. I do not fear the marks of degradation upon you, but my hand shall wipe your face, open your darkened eyes, and show you the light which shall lead you out of the dangerous road into which you have wandered. Brethren, come with me; I will find a place for you; raise yourselves, and little by little you will learn to overcome this ocean of degradation which is ready to overwhelm you."

Men and Spiritists, follow the example of Jesus, and take no heed of the proud Scribes and Pharisees of your own day. You do not live in solitude like John; follow the example of Jesus, and eat and drink at the table of the poor and of the outcast, for you will then bring them a portion of the nourishment which shall sustain them in future ages; the bread of life, which feeds the soul, enlightens the mind, and purifies the heart.

LUKE, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 36–50.

The Sinner at the feet of Jesus.

(36) And a certain Pharisee invited him to eat with him, and he went into the house of the Pharisee, and reclined there. (37) And behold, a certain woman in the town, who was a sinner, having heard that he

Digitized by Google

was in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment. (38) And stood at his feet behind him, weeping, and began to moisten his feet with tears, and to wipe them with the hairs of her head, and she kissed his feet, and anointed them with oil. (39) And when the Pharisee who invited him saw it, he said to himself, If he were a prophet, he would know what sort of woman it is that touches him, for she is a sinner. (40) And Jesus answering saith unto him, Simon, I have something to say to you. And he saith, Teacher, say on. (41) A certain money-lender had two debtors; the one owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. (42) And when they were unable to pay, he absolved them both. Tell me therefore which of them will love him most? (43) And Simon answered and said, I suppose he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast judged rightly. (44) And turning to the woman, he said to Simon, Seest thou this woman? I came into thy house, and thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she has washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. (45) Thou gavest me no kiss, but from the time I came in, this woman hath not ceased to kiss my feet. (46) Thou didst not anoint my head with oil, but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. (47) Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much, and he to whom little is forgiven, loveth little. (48) And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. (49) And they who sat with him began to say to themselves, Who is this who forgiveth sins also? (50) And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

§ 151. The event related here is an illustration of the power of repentance over the destinies of man. The sinful woman was not pardoned because she washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, and poured the perfume over them, but because the action arose from her profound and sincere repentance for her faults, and from the boundless hope and faith which she felt for him at whose feet she knelt.

She was a woman of loose character, and humbled her beauty by wiping those feet with her hair over which she had shed tears of repentance; and she also sacrificed the perfumes which she had employed to increase her attractions. These perfumes were sanctified by the contact of the Most Holy; and the sinner was cleansed from her faults by her readiness to sacrifice these luxuries, the only sacrifice in her power. This was, in fact, the renunciation of her former disorderly life, and implied the sincere promise of future reparation.

Do not mock the sinner at the feet of Jesus, but, like her, come all, without exception, to pour out before him the enervating perfumes which destroy you, and you shall hear

Digitized by Google

words of peace, consolation, and love from his mouth; for to him alone has the Almighty Father given the power to bind and loose on earth and in heaven. The Apostles obeyed the Master, and were his chosen agents, inspired and guided by superior spirits, when they also bound and loosed on earth and in heaven.

We desire to call your attention to a few other points. Why did the Pharisee Simon invite Jesus to his house, and make him recline at table? And how could a woman of bad character find her way into the room?

The Pharisee wished to test Jesus, and to discover his vulnerable point, and he could only hope to succeed by forming a closer acquaintance with him. Even the introduction of Mary was a snare; for otherwise she could no more have entered the Pharisee's house than a loose woman of your own time could enter yours without your permission.

In speaking to Simon (verses 41–43) Jesus made use of a wholly material comparison, in order to be understood by a materially-minded man. The Pharisees were not only proud, but greedy and avaricious; and Jesus wished his proposition to be understood and appreciated by a man of such a character. He to whom most is forgiven will surely be the most grateful; but he will not be forgiven merely because he asks for forgiveness, and his prayers must be fervent and reiterated; for the Lord does not forgive the debt of him who is ready to contract fresh ones, but to him only who will be able to walk firmly in future, without wandering from the straight path.

The words spoken by Jesus (verses 44–47) when he turned towards the woman, had reference to the respective motives of Mary and Simon. He read the thoughts of the Pharisee, and knew why he had received him into his house.

(Verse 48.)—He then said to the woman, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." This forgiveness was not what the human Church makes it. There was deep and sincere repentance, which would be followed by reparation; not severe, or inflicted as a punishment, as in the case of hardened criminals, but made joyfully and cheerfully, for the purpose of recovering

Digitized by Google

lost progress, and returning through pardon to the love of the Lord.

Jesus also said, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Her eyes were opened to her own conduct by her faith in Jesus. She compared the spotless life of the Master with the many stains upon her own; and this made a deep impression on her, and urged her to implore forgiveness at the feet of one whom she regarded as a celestial messenger.

Human interpretations are altogether astray respecting the words spoken by Jesus to the Pharisee: "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, because she loved much."

When Jesus said that Mary would be pardoned because she loved much, he spoke of love from a charitable point of view. Although Mary was a loose character, she had yet a heart which felt for the sorrows of those around her. Her nature was weak and sensitive, and she had been led into an immoral life by the very excess of her love for her family, to whom she gave the greater part of her gains. Her charity was great, and no unfortunate ever implored her pity in vain. Her very fall had been an act of devotion; and you were not told this before. It still happens that some are accused of encouraging vice under pretext of devotion to poor parents; and this is really the origin of many vices which you drive away in shame; whereas advice or assistance might have the same effect as the holy words of Jesus.

Mary was a weak spirit, and desired to struggle against her weakness. She had asked for too severe a trial, and failed at first, but came forth afterwards stronger and braver, not in the eyes of men (for they never pardon, though they have so much need of pardon themselves) but in the eyes of him who explores the heart, and who sees no difference between the guilty though concealed thought, and the accomplished act.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 20–24. LUKE, CHAP. X.—VERSES 13–15.

The Impenitent Cities.

Matth. xi. (20) Then he began to reproach the towns in which most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. (21) Woe to thee, Chorazin, woe to thee, Bethsaida, for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they might have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. (22) Moreover, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. (23) And thou, Capernaum, who art exalted to heaven, shall be brought down to Hades, for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it might have remained until to-day. (24) Verily I say unto thee, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in that day than for thee.

Luke x. (13) Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida, for if the mighty works that have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they might have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. (14) Moreover, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. (15) And thou Capernaum, who art exalted to heaven shalt be cast down to Hades.

§ 152. These words relate to the condition of the spirits who were incarnated at that period. When Jesus said that Tyre and Sidon would have repented in sackcloth and ashes if they had seen the miracles which had been performed in Chorazin and Bethsaida, he made use of material images, appropriate to the minds of that age. The repentance of the spirit consists of bitter remorse for its faults, and subsequent expiation; but everything is moral. Would it have been possible to make such material beings as even the first Christians understand that moral penitence would be enough to atone for a fault in the sight of God? They saw nothing in their transgressions but the outward act, and consequently could only admit a material reparation. Judge otherwise, dear pupils. Fix your attention on the spiritual act, and do penance for this. Then you will commit no material actions in future which might offend the Lord. Let the spirit rule your body, and the submissive flesh will become an obedient instrument, suited to render the purification of the spirit easier and more rapid.

Jesus said that the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon would be dealt with more severely than those of Chorazin and

Digitized by Google

Bethsaida, who had received the light, and had rejected it; and that it should be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the judgment than for Capernaum. The crimes of Sodom tended most to the degradation of matter, while those of Capernaum tended towards the rebellion of the mind. Jesus only made this comparison between Sodom and Capernaum to teach men that the most serious of all crimes which deserve punishment are those committed by the intellect. Your Father knows the weakness of your material organism, and its wanderings are only punished in proportion to the participation of the rational spirit. Capernaum had received light, had witnessed miracles, and had proudly rejected everything; whereas Sodom, a town sunk in the debasement of matter, would perhaps have risen above its brutal passions at the Master's word, and if it had beheld the miracles, would perhaps have accepted the light, listened to the voice of repentance, and renounced its crimes by giving the spirit predominance over brutal instincts.

Do not be surprised at Jesus saying that Sodom *might* have remained till that day. You know that Jesus was in direct and constant sympathy with God, and was doubtless possessed of prescience of the future, as well as knowledge of the past. If he said "it *might* have remained," it was because he did not wish to appear to men to pronounce upon the actions of Him whom no human being can fathom; for you must always remember that Jesus was to appear to the Hebrews as a man like themselves, and did not appear to them to arrogate the judgment of God.

When Jesus said of Capernaum, "Thou who art exalted to heaven" (thou who hast been flooded with light, and hast proudly rejected it), "shalt be cast down to Hades," he made use of expressions appropriate to his hearers. By Hades he alluded covertly to the sufferings of guilty spirits, first in the errant state, and afterwards during reincarnation on your earth, or on still lower worlds of trials and expiations. Hades signifies the conscience of the guilty, and any place of expiation. It is no fixed locality. The errant

Digitized by Google

spirit suffering in space is really, wherever he is, in Hades, as Jesus said allegorically; or as you say, in hell, for he always finds himself in a place of continual tortures. The incarnate spirit is also in hell, when he is imprisoned in flesh in the lower worlds of trials and expiations, and endures those physical and moral sufferings or tortures which are the secret penalty derived from his preceding incarnation, and relative to what his previous existences have left to be repaired.

Jesus alluded to the day of judgment when speaking of Tyre and Sidon and the other cities. He made use of a figure, or a comparison, and his words are to be understood as follows:—"I tell you that the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida will be judged more severely than those of Tyre and Sidon who present themselves together before the Supreme Judge, and that those of Capernaum will be judged more severely than those of Sodom, who present themselves together before the Supreme Judge." You must take account of the figurative style; the necessities and requirements of the age; its prejudices, and the state of its intelligence; and the need of veiling the truth until your own days, when the New Revelation has come to free the spirit from the letter, to prepare men to become the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth. The thought of Jesus was veiled at the time, but in speaking of "the day of judgment," he did not allude to a "last judgment," as the Church says, when every offence, from the beginning of time, will be recalled. The inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, Chorazin and Bethsaida, Capernaum and Sodom, and all other guilty spirits who have dwelt on your planet since the origin of man, have suffered judgment after death, at the termination of each existence; for they have suffered expiation in the errant state, and subsequent reincarnation. Among the guilty spirits belonging to the various towns of which Jesus spoke, some have finished their expiatory trials, and others have greatly advanced. Only a few will await the period of the renovation of your planet without having attained the object of their desires.

Digitized by Google

There will be no "last judgment," as the Church calls it; but during the last days of your material era, the rebellious spirits will be cast down into the inferior worlds, and only those who have arrived at the degree of perfection which they ought to attain will be permitted to remain on your earth, and advance with it in the path of progress. But this is not the idea of the last judgment which man has pictured to himself under the influence of false human interpretations due to the influence of the letter. The guilty spirits will be removed gradually, and the earth will be purified in a way which will be almost imperceptible to you; for its renovation will not be the result of a violent shock, but of continued progression.

You are still in a material era at present, since you are subject to the empire of matter, and your planet is adapted to fulfil the conditions necessary for your existence; but the time will come when the earth which supports you will follow the same progress as your bodies, and will become essentially elevated, purified, and etherealized. The stronger becomes the power of your spirit, the more will your material necessities become reduced, and just as there is a vast physical difference between yourselves and the first men who were cast upon your globe (matter, life, and material organs belong to matter, and spirituality to spirit), even thus is your globe destined, like all others which are suspended in space, to follow a progressive course till the day when its transformation shall have been completed, when you will live spiritually and fluidically on a fluidic world, as men freed from matter.

The period of the renovation of your planet will be that when the spirits who still remain rebellious will be gradually drafted off from your world to the inferior worlds when they leave the former, and when what you call public calamities will thin the population, that it may renew itself more rapidly.

The physical life of your planet will follow the same progressive course as the spirit, which will owe its physical progress, in harmony with that of your sphere, to its moral

Digitized by Google

and intellectual progress. Everything which has been and will be formed in space and eternity is regulated according to the immutable laws of nature, which God has planned and established for the progress of the forming spirit, or spiritual essence, and for that of those spirits who have failed, and thus been subjected to human incarnation. Thus your planet has arisen from impure fluids, and has progressed until it has arrived at its present material condition. From this it will progress continually to a less and less material state, until it finally arrives, by various transformations, at its fluidic state, when the earth and its humanity will be freed from all the impurities of matter.

Every shock and displacement of your planet tends to bring about this transformation. You can understand that when the earth is required to fulfil other functions, it cannot occupy the same position in space. Ages pass away, and these displacements are effected little by little, and at length your planet will rise to her place in the regions of the ethereal fluids, among which you will be required to live; and another, passing in its turn from the centre of formation, will come to perform the present functions of your globe. At the last period of transformation, when your planet is prepared to pass into the purely fluidic state, and when your humanity is ready to pass into the condition of pure spirits, Jesus will appear, as he himself has predicted to you, clothed with all his power, and in all the majesty and glory of his perfect and immaculate purity, and will come to show you the truth without veil; to lead you to the Fire of Omnipotence, and to cause you to know the Father.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 25–27. LUKE, CHAP. X.—VERSES 21–22.

The Wise and Prudent and the Infants.

Matthew xi. (25) At that season, Jesus answered and said, I praise thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast concealed these things from the wise and quick-witted, and hast revealed them

Digitized by Google

to infants. (26) Verily, O Father, for thus was it fitting in thy sight. (27) All things have been given over to me by my Father, and no one knoweth the Son but the Father, nor doth any one know the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son is willing to reveal him.

Luke x. (21) In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in his spirit, and said, I praise thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast concealed these things from the wise and quick-witted, and hast revealed them to infants. Verily, O Father, for thus was it fitting in thy sight. (22) And turning to his disciples, he said, All things have been given to me by my Father, and no one knoweth who is the Son, but the Father, and who is the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son is willing to reveal him.

§ 153. (Matth. xi. 25, 26; Luke x. 21.)—Jesus sought to encourage his disciples, lest they might be alarmed at the task which was imposed upon them. The work of the Lord is entrusted to the simple and innocent, the weak and the small, not in your sense, but in the sense in which you should understand these words. It is entrusted to those who put their trust in the Lord, and have faith and confidence in him, and not to those whom men call strong-minded, who will not admit the truth of anything but what they believe themselves to have discovered, demonstrated, and taught; and who, in their pride, deny the aid and influence of spirits, and attribute everything to the sole power of their will and intelligence. The truth will long remain hidden from them, for they resemble too rich land, which produces large crops of weeds, which stifle the good seed scattered there by the wind. Such men must exhaust their strength in useless efforts; for the superabundant soil must exhaust itself before the good seed can draw thence its needful support, without being choked by superfluity.

Jesus taught men that the Lord does not choose those who enjoy abilities which men admire, but those who are simple in heart, humble in mind, and trustful and loving. The wise and prudent, and the infants of whom Jesus spoke, are those who appear thus in the eyes of men, but the judgment of God is different from that of man.*

(Matth. xi. 27; Luke x. 22.)—In these words Jesus

* Swedenborg says the angels of the inmost heaven appear as little children.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

alluded to his own elevation and mission as the protecting and guiding spirit of your planet and its humanity. Jesus alone among the men to whom he spoke was able to comprehend the infinite greatness of God. This was due to the will of God, who had given him the remembrance of his origin, which is extinguished by matter; and the knowledge of the future, which human eyes do not possess. Jesus, being a pure spirit clothed with a tangible perisprit, was the only one among men who had not undergone human incarnation in the same sense as yourselves. He was always a pure spirit, notwithstanding his corporeal human appearance, and could therefore comprehend his God, and likewise his own nature.

The words, "All things have been given me by my Father," relate to the direct communion existing between the Lord and his messenger. Owing to this direct communion, all things were constantly placed in the hands of Jesus by his Father. The remainder of verse 27 was designed to teach men that they can know nothing of heavenly things, which are extra-human, and belong to the other world, except by revelation. The words allude to the revelation which the Spirits of the Lord now bring you by his command at the time fixed by him for the commencement of the new era. They will teach you who is the Son, for they will teach you the spiritual origin and position of Jesus, and the doctrine personified by him, by explaining and developing, in spirit and in truth, the words, teachings, and moral doctrines of the Master, and the meaning of the revelations and prophecies which he pronounced during his earthly mission.

These words also allude to the future revelation which Christ, the Son, will bring you at the time which he predicted. He will then show you the unveiled truth, and instruct you "who is the Father."

The spirits of the Lord are teaching you "who is the Son;" endeavour, therefore, to walk in his steps. Prepare yourselves, by making yourselves worthy and capable by an

Digitized by Google

active and sustained advance in the path of moral and intellectual progress, to receive the Master, who will teach you "who is the Father."

He who does not comprehend either the greatness or the justice of God, does not know him. He who limits his power, and contracts it to his human intelligence, does not know him; and therefore it is only he who receives and accepts the revelation who can say, when he receives it, that he knows his God in proportion as he has thus been progressively revealed to him.

The New Revelation teaches you "who is the Son," and thus prepares you to make yourselves worthy and capable of knowing "who is the Father;" for it enables you to understand your past, and to look forward to your future. Do you not know, Spiritists, that the Lord has given you a task to accomplish which your sins have rendered difficult, but which, by indefatigable exertions, you will succeed in accomplishing, and that you will then receive your reward by returning to Him from whom you have sprung? Do we not lift the veil of the past spontaneously whenever it is necessary? And have not these details of your former existences which we have thus given you awakened in you the remembrance of your origin, which matter has obliterated? Are not those aspirations towards perfection, with which we constantly seek to inspire you, the lifting of a corner of the veil which hides the future, and which we raise to show you God on his immutable throne, waiting till his repentant children return to his feet, to complete the task which he has entrusted to them?

The man who desires to understand needs no explanation when he has entered on the spiritual path with sincere faith and love. He who receives and accepts the New Revelation, may understand his past and future, because he knows whence he comes and whither he goes; under what conditions he is living on the earth, what he should do, and what he should avoid; and according as he does it or not, what will await him and happen to him after death.

Digitized by Google

He may comprehend his past. Does he not actually know that he has failed, and has therefore been humanized, and sent to the lower worlds of trials and expiations, where he has begun the work of his reformation, and must continue it on earth by toil, humility, disinterestedness, charity, and love, according to material, moral, and intellectual order? Does he not know that although matter has obliterated in him the remembrance of his previous existences, he may yet discover traces of them, when enlightened by the torch of Spiritism, and by carefully studying the bent of his conscience, thoughts, words, and actions, as well as of his evil tendencies and instincts; and thus ascertain what he ought to repair, expiate, avoid, and acquire, in his present existence?

He may know his future. Does he not actually know that when he has completed and finished his trials or his task, according to the will of God, in the lower worlds of trials and expiations, he will take rank among the pure spirits, and will then only have to advance gradually in the errant state, and through successive reincarnations, either on a mission in the inferior worlds, or in the superior worlds, until he has attained to perfection, which alone can lead him to God?

MATTHEW, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 28–30.

The Easy Yoke, and the Light Burden.

(28) Come hither to me, all ye that are weary and burdened, and I will relieve you. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

§ 154. Follow the path which has been traced out for you. Jesus has shown you the road which can alone lead you to eternal happiness; and let every sorrowing soul seek his aid. Every man, however great his sorrows or sufferings, will find in him the Great Physician who can heal all wounds. He is the light of your minds, and enlightens the

Digitized by Google

darkness imposed on you by the flesh. For your sakes he became a man, to your eyes; and suffers with you, and like you. Your tears flow from his eyes, and his heart sympathizes with your sorrows. He sends spirits to you, who can lighten your sufferings; and what does he ask of you in return for so much love and devotion? Does he require any sacrifice from you? Is it to his glory? It has attained its summit! Is it your love? All the spirits of the Lord esteem it happiness to bow before him! He only asks you to toil for your own happiness, under his directions; he stretches out his hand to you, and even upholds him who refuses it.

O come unto him! His yoke is light; he does not lay it upon you, for you are at liberty to receive or to reject it, and he does not use violence, like men, to compel you to follow his ways. He does not command you to believe or die; but tells you, "In Me there is life."

Follow his holy advice, and walk in his ways; and, whether you call yourselves Christians, Jews, or Muslims, whatever may be your external worship, or to whatever earthly nation you belong, come ye all to Him. He leads the sheep to green pastures, where no devouring wolf has ever appeared; he leads them to the superior worlds, inhabited by pure spirits, and to the fluidic worlds, where spirits dwell who have attained to perfection.

You who are weary and burdened by the weight of sufferings caused by your trials, come to Jesus, and he will relieve you. Will you not find the pattern of courage and resignation in him? Is it not his sweet, simple, and persuasive language which renews your sinking courage, and gives you balm which you can apply to your wounds? Is it not Jesus himself who anoints them, and upholds you with his mighty hand, to help you to overcome the obstacles against which your weakness feels itself unable to struggle? Take his yoke upon you, and learn of him that he is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls; the progress you make will lead you to perfection; for you will purify yourselves by following his morality. You will acquire peace of

Digitized by Google

mind by freeing yourselves from your impurities; for the moment your soul has nothing more to expiate, it will enter into the rest of the Lord. But by this you must understand active rest, full of good works and great deeds. It is not rest in your sense of the term, except as being the end of sufferings and expiations.

The yoke of Jesus is easy, and his burden is light. He who follows Jesus with his whole soul does not bear a heavy yoke, for his morality is easily followed by any one who lays aside the narrow views of humanity.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

PAGE

PREFACE v
EDITOR'S PREFACE ix
INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR xxiii

PART I.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW, MARK, AND LUKE.

The Gospels 1
Prediction of the Birth of John 4
The Annunciation 18
Mary's Visit to Elizabeth 34
The Song of Mary 35
Birth of John 37
Song of Zacharias 38
Appearance of the Angel to Joseph 42
"Birth" of Jesus through the agency of the Holy Spirit 42
The Shepherds 55
The Circumcision and Purification 61
Song of Simeon 64
Anna the Prophetess 66
The Magi 68
Flight into Egypt—Slaughter of the Innocents . . . 73

Digitized by Google

PAGE

The Return from Egypt 75
Jesus in the Temple with the Teachers—His apparent Human Life explained up to the time of the commencement of his Ministry 75
Preaching of John—Baptism 89
John's Advice to the People—Testimony borne to Jesus Christ 91
Baptism of Jesus 98
Human Genealogy of Jesus 103
Evolution of the Spirit 108
Fasting and Temptation of Jesus 146
Retirement of Jesus into Galilee 173
Jesus visits Nazareth 174
Jesus rejected by the Nazarenes 174
Calling of Peter, Andrew, James, and John—The Miraculous Draught of Fishes 177
Preaching of Jesus—"Miracles" 181
Sermon on the Mount 192
Salt and Light of the World 197
Jesus came to Fulfil the Law 200
Abounding Justice—Evil Word—Reconciliation . . 203
Repentance 206
Parable of the Barren Fig-tree 207
The Infirm Woman 208
Observance of the Sabbath 209
Evil Thoughts 210
Marriage—Oaths 211
Patience, Resignation, Charity, and Morality . . . 212
Love and Charity towards All 217
Humility and Disinterestedness 219
The Lord's Prayer 220
Fasting 223
The Pure Heart 225
Avarice 227
God and Mammon 228
Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus 233

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Do not Judge Others 237
Prayer 240
Love and Charity 243
The Narrow Gate 243
False Prophets 247
God judges Men by their Works 248
The Leper 250
The Centurion 254
The Widow's Son 260
Healing the Sick 266
Jesus in the Desert 268
The Disciples of Jesus 269
The Tempest Calmed 273
Legions of Evil Spirits Cast Out 281
The Paralytic 293
Calling of Matthew 294
Fasting—New Cloth—New Wine 297
The Daughter of Jairus 302
Blind Men Cured 307
Case of Dumb Possession 309
Sheep without a Shepherd 311
Names and Calling of the Apostles 313
Descent from the Mountain 314
Instructions given to the Apostles 314
Aid granted to the Apostles 327
Promise of the New Revelation 332
Fear God alone 338
Jesus came not to bring Peace, but a Sword 342
Family Love—Patience and Resignation 345
Reflect before Acting 348
He who fulfils the Law of Love and Charity will be Rewarded 349
Mission of the Seventy Disciples 349
Return of the Seventy Disciples 353
John sends his Disciples to Jesus 354
Mission of John 355

Digitized by Google

PAGE

John and Jesus only comprehended by the Children of the Lord 360
The Sinner at the feet of Jesus 362
The Impenitent Cities 366
The Wise and Prudent, and the Infants 370
The Easy Yoke 374

Contents of Vol. I. 377

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY ALLAN KARDEC.

THE SPIRIT'S BOOK.

Containing the Principles of Spiritist Doctrine on the Immortality of the Soul, &c. &c., according to the Teachings of Spirits of High Degree, transmitted through various mediums, collected and set in order by ALLAN KARDEC. Translated from the 120th thousand by ANNA BLACKWELL. Crown 8vo, cloth, 7*s.* 6*d.*

THE MEDIUM'S BOOK;

Or, Guide for Mediums and for Evocations. Containing the Theoretic Teachings of Spirits concerning all kinds of Manifestations, the Means of Communication with the Invisible World, the Development of Medianimity, &c. &c. By ALLAN KARDEC. Translated by ANNA BLACKWELL. Crown 8vo, cloth, 7*s.* 6*d.*

HEAVEN AND HELL;

Or, The Divine Justice Vindicated in the Plurality of Existences. By ALLAN KARDEC. Translated by ANNA BLACKWELL. Crown 8vo, cloth, 7*s.* 6*d.*

London: TRÜBNER & Co. Ludgate Hill.

THE PROBABLE EFFECT OF SPIRITISM UPON THE SOCIAL, MORAL, AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF SOCIETY.

A Prize Essay.

By ANNA BLACKWELL.

London: TRÜBNER & Co. Price 6*d.*

Digitized by Google

THE FOUR GOSPELS

EXPLAINED BY THEIR WRITERS

WITH AN APPENDIX

ON

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

EDITED BY

J. B. ROUSTAING

TRANSLATED BY

W. F. KIRBY

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II

LONDON

TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL

1881

[*All rights reserved*]

101. f. 7[illegible].

Digitized by Google

BODLEIAN LIBRARY
19 MAY 83
OXFORD.

Digitized by Google

PART I.—(*Continued.*)

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW, MARK AND LUKE, COMMONLY CALLED THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 1–8. MARK, CHAP. II.—VERSES 23–28. LUKE, CHAP. VI. VERSES 1–5.

The Sabbath made for Man.

Matthew xii. (1) At that season, Jesus went through the corn-fields on the Sabbath days, and his disciples were hungry, and began to pluck the ears, and to eat. (2) And the Pharisees beholding said to him, Behold thy disciples do what it is unlawful to do on on the Sabbath. (3) And he said to them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him? (4) How he entered into the house of God, and ate the shew-bread, which it was not lawful for him nor for those with him to eat, but only for the priests? (5) Or have ye not read in the Law that on the Sabbath day the priests in the Temple break the Sabbath, and are blameless? (6) And I say unto you that here is one greater than the Temple. (7) And if ye knew what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the innocent. (8) For the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.

Mark ii. (23) And it came to pass, as he went through the corn-fields on the Sabbaths, that his disciples began to pluck the ears of corn by the way. (24) And the Pharisees said to him, See, why do they do what is unlawful on the Sabbaths? (25) And he said to them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was hungry, and they that were with him? (26) How he went into the house of God to Abiathar the high priest, and ate the shew-bread, which it is not lawful to eat, except for the priests, and gave also to those who were with him? (27) And he said to them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. (28) For the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

Luke vi. (1) And it came to pass that on the first Sabbath after the second day of the feast of unleavened bread,* he went through the

* So Liddell and Scott translate the words *δευτερόπρώτον σαββάτον*.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

cornfields, and his disciples plucked the ears, and ate, rubbing them in their hands. (2) And certain of the Pharisees said to them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbaths? (3) And Jesus answered and said to them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him? (4) How he went into the house of God, and took the shew-bread, and ate, and gave also to those who were with him, which it was not lawful for them to eat, but only for the priests? (5) And he said to them, The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

§ 155. We have already explained (§ 82) the motives for the institution of the Sabbath by Moses, and the import of the saying of Jesus, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

The shew-bread, which it was only lawful for the priests to eat, were loaves offered upon the altar. When Jesus reminded the Pharisees of what David had done, he taught man that nothing which God had made, and which was fit for food, was forbidden to the necessities of human existence; and that the shew-bread, like the Sabbath, was lawful to him, in case of necessity.

According to the Law, the Hebrew was to abstain from any manual labour on the Sabbath day, and was not to touch any metal. But the priests broke the Sabbath in the Temple, in performing the ceremonies of their religion, and therefore might have been regarded as guilty.

Jesus told the Pharisees that they did not understand the words, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." The spiritual meaning is that God is always ready to show mercy to his weak and fallible children, and permits them to repent, and repair their faults. In adding, "You would not have condemned the innocent," Jesus alluded to the sentences frequently passed upon those who were accused of sacrilege on the slightest pretext, and stoned without mercy.

Jesus said, "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath," because he was the first who had dared to attack the inviolability of the Sabbath; and even in the eyes of his disciples, he was obliged to rely on the authority of his mission, lest he should shock them. He stated this, by saying, "There

Digitized by Google

is one here who is greater than the Temple;" as being the representative of the Divine will.

§ 156. How should the Sabbath be kept during the spiritual era now opening before men by the New Revelation?

The time is coming when men shall no longer worship in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, but will become the true worshippers whom the Father desires to worship Him in spirit and in truth. The time is approaching, though it has not yet arrived, when men will be united in one and the same belief by this spiritual faith: God is one and alone, the universal Creator; the Father; Jesus is a pure and perfect spirit, the Protector and Ruler of your planet and its humanity; your Master, the Son; and the Spirits of the Lord, when God has appointed to watch over the progress of your planet and its humanity, working under the direction of Jesus; the Holy Spirit.

The time is approaching, though it has not yet arrived, when men will have become the true worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, and will understand that the pure heart is the only true temple of God, and that Christ is present everywhere, where two or more are gathered together in his name, and pray with the heart and not with the lips for mutual instruction, being animated with faith, love, and humility, and no longer divided and separated by any of the external systems of worship which still keep them apart. The time is approaching, though it has not yet come, when men will understand that the Divine law is wholly included in the commandments, "Love one another," and "Love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourselves," by always and under all circumstances acting towards your brethren as you would wish them to act towards you. Men will then understand that this double love should influence them to practise the moral laws of worship, labour, reproduction, preservation, destruction, society, progress, equality, liberty, justice, love, and charity, as they are instructed by the law of Jesus, which the Spirits of the Lord have explained and developed in spirit and in truth.

Digitized by Google

The outward religion of the Hebrews was a purely educational and transitory system; and since the earthly mission of Jesus, it has given rise to human institutions and interpretations, and to external religions which still separate men whom the Spiritual Religion seeks to form into one flock under one Shepherd; Christ who is your Protector, your Ruler, and your Master.

You are passing through a transitional stage; and until these external religions have become reformed, transformed, and united by the influence of the Spiritual Religion among men themselves, leading them to worship the Father in spirit and in truth, they should be regarded in the same light as the institution of the Sabbath.

This day of rest for the body ought to be specially devoted to the service of God; but you have many ways of devoting it to his service. Let your thoughts rise more often and more fervently towards God, since you are less distracted by the necessities of life, and above all, let your good works be more abundant. Remember, both when you begin and when you end your week, that God beholds many poor creatures who wait for their brethren to supply their needs. Sanctify the day of rest by devoting it to good works; follow the example of your brethren in space who are every moment engaged in some useful employment; but let your body rest from the hard toil of the week, your mind from fatiguing philosophical or religious studies, and your heart from being preoccupied with material interests.

Begin your day by consecrating it to the Creator. Sanctify it first by the most fervent prayers for yourselves and your brethren, and render to God the public worship prescribed by your religion. Let those among you who are Spiritists, whatever may be the external religion into which you were born, offer to your God the homage prescribed by your creed, in spirit and in truth. You thus set an example to your brethren among whom you dwell, and who know your faith and opinions. This external religion is really a necessary restraint for those who are less advanced than you, and helps them to remember their Creator, by im-

Digitized by Google

pressing their senses with external rites and material images.

After this, relieve and console whomsoever you can. Go to those whom you have offended, and ask them to forget your faults; and go to those who have cruelly injured you in your interests, happiness, or pride, and bring them your pardon and your peace. Visit those who are sick and unhappy; exhort them to resignation, instruct them, and encourage them to hope. Visit those unhappy ones who want the necessities of life, and relieve them according to your means. Impose on yourselves some slight privation every day in the week for their sakes, according to your abilities and position. Take this offering to those who are in want; and if you are unable to do this, if you are so poor yourselves that you are really unable to make any sacrifice whatever, endeavour at least to console those who are suffering from any misfortune.

Go then, children, and sanctify the Lord's day by good works, and sincere and holy resolutions. When your day is ended, and you thank God for the little good which he has permitted you to accomplish, ask that he may permit you to do more in future. Search your hearts, to discover if you have done your work as well as you were able. Go, then, and if you act thus the blessings of the Lord will descend upon you. Rest your bodies from exhausting labour, but never let your hearts rest from any good which you can accomplish.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 9–14. MARK, CHAP. III.—VERSES 1–6. LUKE, CHAP. VI. VERSES 6–11.

Cure of the man with the palsied hand, on the Sabbath.

Matth. xii. (9) And departing thence, he came into their synagogue. (10) And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand, and they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might denounce him. (11) And he said to them, What man among you, who has a sheep, would not seize hold of it and pull it out, if it should fall into a ditch on the Sabbath days? (12) How much better,

Digitized by Google

Ballantyne Press
BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO., EDINBURGH
CHANDOS STREET, LONDON

Digitized by Google

THE FOUR GOSPELS

EXPLAINED BY THEIR WRITERS

WITH AN APPENDIX

ON

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

EDITED BY

J. B. ROUSTAING

TRANSLATED BY

W. F. KIRBY

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II

LONDON

TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL

1881

[*All rights reserved*]

101. f. [illegible]

Digitized by Google

therefore, is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days. (13) Then he saith to the man, Stretch out thy hand. And he stretched it out, and it was restored healthy like the other. (14) And the Pharisees went out, and took counsel against him how they might destroy him.

Mark iii. (1) And he entered the synagogue again, and there was a man there whose hand was diseased. (2) And they were watching if he would heal him on the Sabbath days, that they might accuse him. (3) And he saith to the man whose hand was diseased, Rise up in the midst. (4) And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil; to save life, or to destroy it? And they were silent. (5) And looking round upon them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts, he saith to the man, Stretch out thy hand. And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored healthy like the other. (6) And the Pharisees went out immediately, and took counsel with the Herodians how they might destroy him.

Luke vi. (6) And it came to pass on another Sabbath that he went into the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. (7) And the Scribes and Pharisees watched him if he would heal on the Sabbath day, that they might find an accusation against him. (8) And he knew their plots, and said to the man whose hand was withered, Rise up, and stand in the midst. (9) And he rose up, and stood. Then Jesus said to them, Consider ye, what is fitting, to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath days; to save life, or to destroy it? (10) And looking round upon them all, he said to the man, Stretch out thy hand. And he did so, and his hand was restored healthy like the other. (11) And they were filled with rage, and debated with each other what they should do to Jesus.

§ 157. We need not repeat the explanations which we have already given respecting the Sabbath, and the use which man should make of it.

The sick man who was healed by Jesus in the synagogue suffered from paralysis of the right hand. This is the correct meaning of the *withered* hand, as some translations express it.

We have explained twice already (§§ 110 and 121) how Jesus cured paralysis. He healed the paralysed hand, and rendered it as healthy as the other, by the magnetic action of his will and his gaze, and directed strengthening fluids upon the diseased hand, and the organism of the patient. Have you not seen magnetic effects produced by a look?

You are told in the narrative of Mark (v. 5) that Jesus looked upon the Scribes and Pharisees with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts. These are human expressions, and when you read the Gospel narratives you must never confound expressions which reproduce the im-

Digitized by Google

pressions, ideas, and opinions of the men surrounding Jesus, and to whom he spoke, with the actual words, personality, and actions of the Master himself.

The heart of Jesus was never inflamed with anger. The original word signifies either anger or indignation; and it must here be understood to mean indignation. The Hebrews, like yourselves, constantly spoke of the wrath of God as weighing upon the guilty. But how could God and Christ partake in the feeling of anger which they denounced in men? The men around Jesus thought that he was indignant at seeing the Scribes and Pharisees resist his efforts to reform them. In reality, he suffered when he saw the guilty spirits whom he desired to enlighten, close their eyes against the light lest they might perceive it. Are not your guardian angels grieved at the hardness of your hearts; and were not the Scribes and Pharisees gifted with free will? Do not wonder at the painful impression which Jesus experienced, notwithstanding his knowledge of the future. Consider well the nature of the fore-knowledge of God, and that which Jesus possesses as the direct representative of the divine will, having regard to the free will of man. We have already explained to you that God sees and knows the state of the spirit, and follows the phases of progress, and the successive stages of existence which the spirit must pass through, in which he is required to exert his free will, either for good or evil, by the action of his own will, or under the secret influence of the good or evil spirits whom he attracts or repulses according to the good or evil tendency of his feelings, desires, and tendencies. Man is subject to this influence at every moment, and this constitutes the temptation which he is free to yield to, or to resist. He is always free to listen to good inspirations, or to close his ears against them; to follow them or not to follow them; or to accept or reject evil inspirations. Consequently, it is under these surrounding influences that the spirit, in the fulness of his free will, must advance or stand still in the path of progress. It is thus that the Scribes and

Digitized by Google

Pharisees were required to accept or reject the teachings of Jesus.

The Scribes and Pharisees who stood around Jesus in the synagogue were hardened incarnate spirits. It was therefore improbable that they would accept the light, but they had yet the opportunity afforded them of escaping from painful expiations; for the Lord never shows any partiality. Spirits are generally incarnated by their own free choice, as regards both the kind and scene of their experiences. They generally select scenes which are congenial to them; and pride reigned supreme among the men of authority among the Jews at the time of Jesus; the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests. Pride closed their eyes and ears; but the goodness of God opened to them, as to all others, this new path of purification. Their guardian angels worked for their advancement as they do for all; but they repulsed them by an effort of their independent will; and in the fulness of their free choice, they accepted the evil influences and inspirations of evil spirits. But even if the new path which was thus opened to them was sterile in that existence, it would nevertheless yield fruits of purification after death, with the aid of subsequent existences.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 15–21.

Mission of the Messiah.

(15) And when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence, and large crowds followed him, and he healed them all, (16) And cautioned them not to make him known, (17) That the word might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, (18) Behold my son, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall announce judgment to the nations. (19) He shall not strive nor shout, nor shall any one hear his voice in the streets. (20) A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, until he shall have brought judgment to victory. (21) And the nations shall trust in his name.

§ 158. The words of the prophet Isaiah apply to Jesus, and are easily understood by freeing the spirit from the letter. You must remember what had just taken place, and how the Pharisees had been plotting together to destroy Jesus, and consulting what they should do against him;

Digitized by Google

and the caution which Jesus himself gave to those who followed him, and whom he healed.

Jesus is the servant of God, and his beloved, because he is a pure and perfect spirit. God chose him by appointing him to be the protector and ruler of your planet. His soul delighteth in him, by communicating to him his power, justice, and compassion, and thus exalting your Master by entrusting him with the formation of your planet, and with the direction and guidance both of the planet itself, and of everything which moves or exists upon it, as well as of humanity, in the paths of physical, moral, and intellectual progress, that he may lead you to the purity and perfection to which you ought to attain. God constantly puts his spirit upon him by the direct Divine inspiration which he communicates to him.

Jesus has manifested justice to the nations by his earthly mission, by showing them the straight and sure course of conduct by which alone they can reach the goal. He still manifests justice to the nations to-day, when the new and regenerative era of Spiritism has commenced, by the spirits of the Lord, who come in his name to explain and to develop in spirit and in truth the good news which he himself preached to men. But this time he illumines the path of progress in the name of the Spirit of Truth; and all men can follow it with unhesitating steps, guided by the spiritual light from the torch of truth, through knowledge, charity, and love, which are about to reconcile faith and reason.

(Matth. xii. 19.)—These words alluded to the customs of the Hebrews, who assembled in the streets to deliberate over important matters, when every one sought to enforce his own opinion by trying to shout down his opponents. But Jesus did not strive nor shout, nor was his voice thus heard in the streets. You are told that he spoke to men as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

(Matth. xii. 20.)—These words allude to guilty spirits in whom there is any tendency, however slight, to improvement. Jesus never did and never will break the bruised reed, or quench the smouldering flax, because every spirit must reach the goal, and Jesus never rejects any guilty

Digitized by Google

spirit until justice shall be done; that is, until the spirit has freed itself by expiation from the vices which made it unjust and impure. Even as you call Jesus the Just One on account of his purity, thus unjustice in this passage is equivalent to impurity. He shall not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, until he shall have assured the victory to justice; or until the spirits incarnated upon your earth shall have become purified, either on your planet, at the time of its renovation, or by means of long ages of expiation on the lower worlds to which the spirits who have remained guilty and rebellious until this period have been banished. But at length even these spirits will clearly perceive their wilful perversity and blindness, and their dread of expiation, and their repentance and remorse will cause them to incline, however feebly, towards something better.

"And in his name shall the nations trust." All will understand that his morality alone can make men progress; and all will trust in his influence to reach perfection. The present revelation opens and unfolds this new phase.

The words of the prophet Isaiah must be fulfilled respecting the Pharisees who took council together against Jesus. They were then the bruised reed which he would not break, and were afterwards to become the smouldering flax which he would not quench. They were, like all others, required to free themselves by expiation from the vices which made them unjust, and to purify themselves. In order that these words might be fulfilled sooner, Jesus commanded the sick persons who followed him, and whom he healed, not to make Him known, lest these guilty spirits might be led to plunge themselves deeper in their evil courses, and thus be exposed to still severer expiations.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 22–28. MARK, CHAP. III.—VERSES 20–26.

Blasphemy of the Pharisees.

Matth. xii. (22) Then they brought a demoniac to him who was blind and dumb, and he healed him, so that the blind and dumb both spake

Digitized by Google

and saw. (23) And all the crowds were astonished, and said, Is not this the son of David? (24) But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man does not cast out devils except by Beelzeboul, the ruler of the devils. (25) But Jesus knowing their thoughts, said to them, Every kingdom which is divided against itself is made desolate, and every house divided against itself shall not stand. (26) And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? (27) And if I cast out demons by Beelzeboul, by whom do your sons cast them out? by this shall they be your judges. (28) But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come unto you.

Mark iii. (20) And they came into the house, and a crowd collected again, so that they were not able to eat bread, (21) And when those near him heard it, they came out to seize on him, for they said, He is out of his mind. (22) And the Scribes came down from Jerusalem, and said, He hath Beelzeboul, and casteth out demons by the ruler of the demons. (23) But having summoned them, he said to them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? (24) And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. (25) And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. (26) And if Satan rises up and is divided against himself, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

§ 159. This man was subjugated by an evil spirit, who rendered him blind and dumb. The obsessing spirit shed the fluids which surrounded him over his victim's organs of sight and hearing, and the fluidic action caused by the combination of their perisprits paralysed these organs, and deprived the patient of their use for a time. Jesus healed him by the action of his powerful will, which drove away the obsessing spirit. At the same moment, he restored the patient's organs of sight and hearing to their normal condition by the magnetic action of the fluids which he directed upon him. This subjugation of the patient was an expiation for his having previously greatly abused the faculty of speech, and for his not having profited by the light which had been given him.

When the multitude beheld an event which they could neither explain nor comprehend, they were seized with wonder and admiration, and exclaimed, "Is not this the son of David?" It had been foretold that the greatest of the prophets should be of the lineage of David, and the son of David was regarded by Hebrew interpretations as a material liberator.

The words which Jesus addressed to the Scribes and Pharisees, as well as those spoken of him by his relations,

Digitized by Google

or those who were regarded as such by men, referred as much to the future as to the present. Consequently they apply to Spiritism as well as to the Gospel. They were recorded as a lesson for the present time, as regards the apostles and disciples of Jesus, and for the future, as regards the advent of the present era of Spiritism, then future, by the New Revelation. The ages are all linked together, and the further you advance, the better will you understand the close connection which exists between the appearance of Jesus on earth and the present spirit-manifestations. By revealing the origin of Jesus, we have already taught you that his appearance on earth was in reality a spirit-manifestation. As the protector and ruler of your planet and its humanity, he came to pave the way, and lay the foundations for your regeneration. The present manifestation is likewise caused by spirits who are sent among you to continue and to develop the Master's work.

In order that Jesus might be either understood or listened to, he adapted his language to the intelligence of those to whom he spake. Consequently, like themselves, he used such terms as Beelzeboul, Satan, the ruler of the demons, the demon, the devil; but when rightly understood, these terms must be taken figuratively, to designate the evil spirits who, having originally fallen into evil courses, continue to work evil towards men.

When the Pharisees accused Jesus of accomplishing his mighty works by the aid of the Spirit of Darkness, he pointed out to them that their own sons, the Hebrews, were likewise gifted with the same power, though to a very inferior extent. There were some chosen men sent among the Hebrews on a mission, as there always are among all nations, to guide them in the right path, even when things are at their worst.

Thus there were men of sincere piety among the Hebrews, who obeyed the law of Moses from their hearts, intending thus to serve God; and such men sometimes succeeded in driving away the malevolent spirits who caused obsessions and subjugations, by prayer and perseverance.

We have already explained (§ 121) that those children of

Digitized by Google

men who purify themselves and raise themselves above their fathers, are their natural judges.

Spiritists, the Scribes and Pharisees of your own days, accuse you now, as those of the time of Jesus accused him, of acting under demoniacal influences. But we repeat the words of Jesus, that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. Know, children of men, that you can relieve your suffering brethren by your faith, your prayers, and your wisdom, and repel the spirits of darkness who seek to dwell among you. Therefore seek more and more to acquire that elevation of thought, that freedom from the things of the flesh, and that self-denial which shall make the prison of flesh which you inhabit, simply a flexible garment. You will then enjoy increasing power to cast out the evil spirits, and will also purify yourselves more and more, and the men around you will prepare enlightened guides for succeeding generations who will lead them easily to the end of their journey. Take courage; prepare and purify yourselves, and never forget that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. Let all unite, and march boldly under the flag that we have unfurled for you; follow it always, and we will guide your path.

(Matth. xii. 28.) When we free the spirit from the letter, the expression, "the Spirit of God," as applied to Jesus, signifies the direct influence which the Lord exerts upon him; and as applied to men, you will understand, as Spiritists, that it relates to the purified spirits sent to you by the Lord, as intermediaries between his will and yourselves.

We have explained to you that God, the omnipotent Ruler, is One, Alone, and Indivisible. This is the great secret which we concealed, that it might not be fully revealed until the hour had come. God is eternal and infinite, and rules in illimitable space over all the universes. He is the incessant and eternal Creator; he is the Father of each and all, and of whatever exists in space. The law of progress is the immutable law which he has established for all worlds, but the constitution of each world is appro-

Digitized by Google

priate to itself. It is not necessary for everything to pass through precisely the same phases, for there are spirits who have never fallen, just as there are worlds which have remained in fluidic conditions, or which are more or less material, according to the requirements of the spirits who are fitted to inhabit them. When we come to explain the spiritual meaning of the words, "In my Father's house are many mansions," we will give you fuller and more complete explanations, which would be out of place here, as they would lead us beyond the limits to which we must confine ourselves at present.

We have already told you that every world or planet is under the charge of a perfectly pure spirit, who has watched over its formation, and is then entrusted with its guidance and progress. This spirit is not only morally perfect, but is also perfect in knowledge, relatively to his mission, and to the work which has been entrusted to him. This presiding spirit of the planet is in direct communion with God. He approaches the Universal Fire, and it is through him that the wishes of the Omnipotent Lord are transmitted directly, first to the great spirits, and then from one to another through the intermediate grades of the spiritual scale, till they are communicated to yourselves by your guardian angels, and other good spirits. This communication is effected with the quickness of thought; and it is thus that the Spirit of God works, and comes among you.

Jesus is one of those spirits who approach the Universal Fire. He is entrusted with the guidance of your world; he is pure among the purest of those who labour at the progress of your planet and its humanity, under his direction. He is of perfect and immaculate purity, and as he has never fallen, his essence has always remained pure. It is he, the servant of God, and our Master and yours, who presides over your planet, and guides and guards it with the eye of a father. He is in direct communion with the Lord, like those of his brethren who are equal to him in purity, and each of whom is entrusted with a similar mission. He receives his commands direct without intermediaries; and

Digitized by Google

in this sense it may be said that the Father alone knows the Son, and the Son alone knows the Father.

Bow before your devoted Saviour with reverence, gratitude and love. Even since your globe arose from the fluids which are diffused through space, and his divine will, as the messenger of God, combined these substances to form a world, according to the immutable law of progress, he has always watched over you anxiously through the various phases which your spirit has passed through from its origin to the present time, and his powerful sympathy has always extended the protection of the Omnipotent over your planet and its humanity.

Love Jesus with all the energy of your souls, for it is he who took upon himself an apparently human body to lay the foundations of the work of regeneration. Love him with all your strength, for he accepted incarnation, though he needed not to suffer any incarnation as an expiation, not even in these exalted worlds where spirits who have remained pure till they have reached a very high elevation, and have then failed, how slightly soever, exile themselves to redeem their faults. Nothing can stand before the Lord but spotless perfection, and even so slight a failing that your faculties would be incapable of noticing it would immediately become an offence which the progressing spirit would perceive at once, and would expiate by a more or less material or more or less fluidic incarnation, according to his degree of elevation, and the extent and gravity of the fault. Every penalty is proportioned to the fault, and there are some faults in the eyes of the Omnipotent Lord which are so subtle that they would escape you, but they do not escape the spirit who is sufficiently elevated to perceive his fault even before it has germinated, so to speak; and he voluntarily exiles himself to expiate his fault by depriving himself for a time of the infinite joys of a free and pure spirit. Love Jesus with all the strength of your souls, for he is coming now to continue his work of regeneration, and to lead you by the New Revelation and by the Spirit of Truth, in the continuous path of moral and intellectual progress,

Digitized by Google

and to lead you step by step to the one eternal God, the King of heaven and earth, to whom you owe the homage and tribute of your adorations, for he alone is entitled to them, and to him alone you should offer them.

The kingdom of God has come to him who has discovered the path which leads most directly and speedily to the goal.

The kingdom of God had come to the hardened Jews, who had distorted the law of Moses as much, and more, than Catholicism has distorted the law of Christ. This kingdom came to those who had prepared a long and painful expiation for themselves, to open before them a door of hope, and the means of arriving at well-being by the shortest path.

The kingdom of God has also come to you, who instead of simply following the law of Jesus (which would have been sufficient for you) have allowed yourselves to be led astray by pride and selfishness, and have perverted this pure law in such a manner as to bend it to your impurities. Some have made it an elastic garment to bend to all the caprices of their greatest irregularities (we speak here of those who make religion only a means, by practising it outwardly, and trying to bend it to their needs), whereas it is a Gehenna to others, constraining their movements in a painful manner (we speak here of those who seriously accept religion, but who are wanting in intelligence, and strain themselves to support the whole weight of the yoke which is imposed on them, however heavy they may find it).

The kingdom of God has also come to you, for after we, the apostles and disciples of Jesus, had laboured in the path which he opened up and marked out, we now clear it of the thorns and thistles which have choked it, by the New Revelation, and with the aid of our brethren, the other spirits of the Lord. We are removing the sharp stones one by one, and hold out our hands to encourage you to advance, removing the bandage from the eyes of those whose sight is still weak, and letting the light shine upon the eyes of those who are able to bear it. The kingdom of God is drawing nearer and nearer, and we will show you more and

Digitized by Google

more of its glory; but you must wait till your sight is sufficiently strong to sustain its rays.

The accusation which the Scribes and Pharisees brought against Jesus of being the agent of Beelzeboul is repeated several times in different places, and under different circumstances. What Mark reports did not take place at the time or under the circumstances related by Matthew, but immediately after Jesus had selected the twelve Apostles, and had given them power to heal the sick, and to drive away the evil spirits or demons.

(Mark iii. 21.)—You know that during his earthly mission Jesus appeared to men to be a man like themselves, and the member of a human family. The revelation made to Joseph and Mary was kept secret till after the accomplishment of his mission, when its promulgation led men to regard the Master as a portion of God himself, since it contained the veiled announcement of the spiritual origin of Jesus, which was designed to be expounded by the New Revelation. As the Hebrews always married in their own tribe, they were nearly always relations, or regarded themselves as such; and consequently Jesus appeared to men to be surrounded by those who were more or less distantly related to him. The relations of Jesus thought that he had lost his wits, when they saw him choose his Apostles and confer such powers upon them; for the conditions of their humanity did not allow them to suppose that he could rise to such an elevation. Consequently they came to seize upon him, saying that he had been taken with madness.

Jesus was the personification of the doctrine which is springing up afresh among you, and, like every great and generous thought, it has been but little understood. Thus, even among the members of his own family (humanly speaking) he met with great opposition, for they were not aware of his extra-human origin. Did he not say himself that no one is a prophet in his own country? And in your own days, do you not meet with divisions in families, and stones cast at any member who wanders from the beaten track?

Digitized by Google

Man hates everything which he is unable to comprehend, and he condemns everything which troubles or alarms him.

You, Spiritists, who accept the New Revelation, and thus quit the beaten track, are accused by your relations and others (as was Jesus in his day) of having lost your wits, or being attacked with madness. At the same time, the Scribes and Pharisees of your age accuse you of acting under diabolical influence. New disciples of Christ, who preach the doctrine of the Master, which is renewed among you to be explained and developed in spirit and in truth, by the New Revelation, unite the influence of your example to that of your precepts, and reply to these accusations by patience, mildness, indulgence, firmness, and courage. Christ watches over and protects you, and causes the spirits of the Lord to guide you in your course.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 29–37. MARK, CHAP. III.—VERSES 27–30. LUKE, CHAP. XI. VERSES 21–23; XII. 10.

The Strong Man Armed—Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit —The Tree known by its Fruit.

Matth. xii. (29) How can any one come into the house of a strong man, and plunder his goods, unless he shall first bind the strong man, and shall then plunder his house? (30) He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me disperseth. (31) Therefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be remitted unto men, but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be remitted unto men, (32) And if any one shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be remitted unto him, but if any one shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be remitted unto him, neither in this age, nor in that which is to come. (33) Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt, for the tree is known by its fruit. (34) Offspring of vipers, how can ye speak good things, being evil? for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. (35) The good man brings forth good things from the good treasure of his heart, and the wicked man brings forth evil things from the evil treasure. (36) And I say unto you that for every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give an account of it in the day of judgment. (37) For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Mark iii. (27) No man can enter the house of the strong man, and plunder his goods, unless he shall first bind the strong man, and then he will plunder his house. (28) For I say unto you that all manner of sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and the blasphemies which they have blasphemed. (29) But if any one shall blaspheme against

Digitized by Google

the Holy Spirit, he hath no forgiveness in the age, but is liable to age-long judgment. (30) Because they said, He hath an unpurified spirit.

Luke xi. (21) When the strong man is armed, and guards his court-yard, his possessions are in quiet. (22) But when one who is stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he takes from him his armour in which he trusted, and they will distribute his spoils. (23) He who is not with me is against me, and he who gathereth not with me scattereth.

Luke xii. (10) And if any one shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but to him who shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven.

§ 160. We have often told you that Jesus spoke to the men of that age in terms which were necessary for them, teaching what was needful for the present, without prejudice to the future, for which, however, he prepared the way. He used material images, which men could understand, and which appealed strongly to their imaginations; and all such images were intended to convey some lesson or warning. He said, "The spirit quickeneth, and the words which I speak unto you are spirit and life." It is for you who have been called upon to receive the New Revelation, to perceive the true sense and import of these words. You should therefore always seek to free the spirit from the letter, that you may be able to discover the thought of the Master, and the true meaning of his words.

What Jesus says (Matth. xii. 29; Mark iii. 27) about the strong man, is an emblem. It is sin which binds him, and surrounds him with snares to destroy him; and as soon as it has overcome him, it strips him of all his virtues.

(Luke xi. 21, 22.)—As long as man is strong in himself, watching over his conscience, and always on the alert to strive against his evil instincts, he is sure of overcoming them, but if he forgets himself, gives way to sloth, and lets his conscience sleep, he is assailed by vices which snare him in their baneful toils, and become his masters. They tear his weapons from him one by one, and gradually deprive him of his good resolutions, and his virtues, and beat him down by turning them against himself, for lost virtues become converted unto vices. He who does not yield to evil, must practise the good which is opposed to it; but the contrary is also true, and he who is negligent in

Digitized by Google

well-doing, falls inevitably into the evil which is opposed to it. Is not a man who is deficient in charity proud and selfish? Does not the man who forgets his God become impious? It is the same with all the virtues which you do not practise, and which are consequently replaced by the corresponding vices which they ought to have destroyed in you.

The words of Jesus, "And he will take his spoils" (Luke xi. 22), are not an emblem as regards the intelligence of those to whom they were spoken. They follow naturally from the material figure which Jesus set before the Hebrews. Every man who forces his way into the house of another as a burglar, and disarms and bind him, does so with a material object in view. Thus Jesus added, "And he will take his spoils," because the Jews would not have been able to understand the motive by which the burglar was actuated, unless he had turned his victory to his own advantage. In any case, the vices which replace virtues in the heart of him who allows his watch upon himself to slumber, do not profit by the virtues that they have destroyed, but they profit by their destruction when they drive them from the heart, in the sense that they have made their way where they ought not to have penetrated, and have established themselves where they should not have been allowed to enter, and then steal the virtues from the asylum which has been opened to them.

(Matth. xii. 30; Luke xi. 23.)—"He who is not with me is against me," said Jesus. He who does not follow the law of Christ (that is, the moral doctrine of which he is the personification) wanders from it. He is then against him, and wanders from his ways.

"And he who gathereth not with me, scattereth." He who does not walk in the way opened by Jesus, does not gather the treasures which the Lord reserves for the just. He wanders from the path, squanders these treasures, and loses precious time.

(Matth. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 28, 29; Luke xii. 10.)—Do not be surprised at the slight variations which you find in each narrative. The words of Jesus which the three

Digitized by Google

Evangelists recorded were pronounced in different places, and at different times, and are only brought together here to avoid repeating nearly the same words, and to develop the thought of the Master by placing them in juxtaposition. You can easily understand that Jesus often repeated the same words to the Hebrews who were gathered round him; but his ideas were not always expressed in exactly the same terms. Jesus always appropriated the lesson to the intelligence and the needs of those whom he taught; and hence arose those slight differences which you notice in the records. Each Evangelist recorded nearly similar events happening near together, but the accompanying incidents did not all correspond. Each recorded in his own way, and under medianimic inspiration, what he had seen or heard, or what he had been told.

(Matth. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 28, 29; Luke xii. 10.)—In these words, Jesus first sets forth the difference between the Omnipotent Lord and himself, notwithstanding his exalted nature, and his spiritual origin and position. Blasphemy consists in denying God, and in accusing him who is all love, knowledge and justice, and the Absolute Truth, of injustice or error; and what crime can be worse than this? Is not blasphemy against God the greatest possible offence? When the children of a family revolt against the authority of their elder brother, even supposing that he is acting as the representative of the father, their fault will always be less than if they insult and revile the father himself. You may carry the comparison further if you remember that Jesus personifies the morality which he taught still more by his actions than by his words.

The threat of eternal punishment attributed to Jesus has no existence. The words used by the Hebrews which have been thus translated have a double meaning. When applied to God, they have an absolute meaning, and imply eternity in the strict sense; but when applied to men, these expressions were used in a relative sense, to designate periods of immense and indefinite extent, but which must nevertheless terminate. When Jesus said that he who blasphemed

Digitized by Google

against the Holy Spirit should not be forgiven, he used expressions which were intended to be fully explained at the time of the New Revelation. In the meantime, he allowed men to interpret them for themselves, and they have interpreted them falsely, by attaching the idea of eternal punishment to them, understanding Jesus to have used expressions in an absolute sense which he himself used only relatively. They did not understand that the words of Jesus implied a relative eternity; more than one age, and the age that is to come. He spoke thus to give them some idea of the vast duration of the punishment of him who denies God, or who accuses Him who is all love, knowledge, and justice, and the Absolute Truth, of falsehood or error. But everything has its object, and these false interpretations were due to the state of intelligence and to the needs of successive ages. They formed part of the means and conditions of progress; they were useful at the time, and prepared the way for the future of the New Revelation which now opens before you.

Jesus spoke to men whose imaginations needed to be strongly impressed. You see this still, for we do not speak the same language to you all. We often accommodate ourselves to your weaknesses and even to your prejudices that we may gradually lead you on to truths which might have repelled you at first. We never fight against human opinions unnecessarily, as long as they are consistent with the progress of humanity. When a feeble spirit clings firmly to such and such a doctrine, or to such and such a ceremony, we do not say to him, "The religion which is pleasing to the Lord must spring from the heart alone, and outward observances are worthless in his eyes." On the contrary, we say to the feeble man who requires some support to sustain his faith, or as a barrier to prevent his passing certain limits, "Serve the Lord conscientiously; and fulfil your external observances with zeal, but do not let them lead you to neglect that worship of the soul which is pleasing to the Lord. You are weak and need support; seek it therefore where you have been accustomed to find it, but unite it with

Digitized by Google

that of your friends, the spirits of the Lord, who aid and surround you, and who see only one object for you to attain; happiness in the future life, and peace in your present existence."

We thus sympathize with human prejudices and weaknesses; but do not misunderstand us. We never sympathize with the faults and errors of men; but speak severely to some and gently to others, suiting our language to the character and disposition of each. Consequently Jesus, the Supremely Wise, knew better than we how to make his lesson comprehensible in an opportune and useful manner to the hardened spirits to whom he spoke; and he never really threatened man with eternal punishment.

Jesus appropriated his words to the intelligence of his hearers; but the fault involves a punishment which you may regard as eternal, in proportion to your measures of time; for the rebellious spirit who blasphemes against his God must suffer long trials to bring him back to his duty. Such an insane heart implies a degree of pride and rebellion in the spirit which must lead him into many falls. Do you not admit that different degrees of delinquency imply a greater or less degree of perversity, and that he who has committed only one fault, and that comparatively slight, is more ready to repent and is less profoundly vicious than a man who has sinned often and deeply, it being understood that the amount of guilt is in proportion to the intention, and not to the absence of opportunity?

There is no such thing as absence of pardon in a material sense, but it is relative, and refers to the terror of the guilty spirit at his punishment and its duration. This, though nothing in eternity, nevertheless appears to be eternity itself to him who cannot see beyond the narrow limits of his intelligence. Have you not heard guilty spirits groaning under the weight of "eternal sufferings," and do you not know that this very belief is one of the means of bringing them to repentance? Do you not know why? It is thus: The severity and duration of the punishment wear out the evil energies of the guilty one.

Digitized by Google

Wearied with suffering, and terrified at the prospect of "eternal sufferings," he is thrown back upon himself. He looks back upon the past with despair, reckons up all the faults and crimes which have driven him into the abyss, and exclaims at last, "If it were only to be done over again!" Then the spirits around him begin to make their influence felt, and lead him to reflect how he would act if it were to be done over again; and little by little he is led to repent, and repentance gradually restores the hope of pardon. Under the influence of this hope his repentance becomes developed, and he suffers his expiation with patience and resignation. At length, after sincere and profound repentance, comes the desire to repair and expiate the past, and to progress by the aid of new efforts; and God pardons him, and grants the guilty spirit, who has now become repentant and submissive, the favour of reincarnation, that he may return to the path of reparation and progress.

When Jesus or the Evangelists speak of the Holy Spirit, the expression signifies the good spirits who are the messengers and ministers of the Lord to men, according to their degree of elevation. If Jesus here speaks of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to denote blasphemy against God, it is because the Jews used the term to denote the intelligence of God himself. But it comes to the same thing, for exalted spirits are only the reflection of the Omnipotent Lord.

When a man blasphemes against God, he rebels against the inspirations of his guardian angel and of other good spirits, and is never pardoned, so long as he remains guilty and rebellious. Eternal punishment would imply eternal guilt, and if the spirit remained eternally guilty and rebellious, he would be guilty of an eternal sin, and would never be pardoned either in this or in any future age; but it is not and cannot be thus. Such an idea would be contrary to the omnipotence, justice, goodness, and infinite mercy of God, as well as to the promise made by Jesus in the name of the God of Love, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, as well as in the following words, "My Father does not desire that one of his little ones should perish. I am come to

Digitized by Google

save that which was lost. Be ye perfect, as your Father in the heavens is perfect." Thus there is no guilty or rebellious spirit who does not submit, in the eternity before him, to the immutable law of progress, perfectibility, suffering, and expiation, nor any such spirit who will not be overcome with remorse and repentance, in the exercise of his free-will, and under the action of his conscience. Every such spirit will be brought back to the fold like a wandering sheep, by the aid of moral sufferings in the errant state, appropriate to his faults, and afterwards by trials and expiations, with time and reincarnation. He will thus be led back to his Father's house like the Prodigal Son, repentant and submissive, and will become purified, and will one day be received by the Great Father, the God of love and of infinite mercy.

(Matth. xii. 33.)—By these words, Jesus taught his disciples to judge of men. Assuredly, if a man's instincts are evil, he will be guilty of evil actions, but if on the other hand you see him attempting to act rightly, and endeavouring to fulfil the duties which are imposed on him by humanity, you may say, "The tree is good," and you may then be sure that, once cultivated, it will become better.

(Matth. xii. 34, 35.)—By the term "offspring of vipers," an expression suited to the time and the men, Jesus designated that race of proud and inferior spirits who believed that they could succeed without aid, and did not wish to receive any light. Every word flows from the heart when it openly expresses the mode of thought. If it is veiled or smoothly expressed when aggressive, it is a lie, an hypocrisy, or a crime. Thus Jesus said to the Pharisees, "How can ye speak good words when you yourselves are evil?" The words proceed from the treasure of the heart; if the treasure is bad, the words and actions are bad, whether they are the open expression of the thought, or whether they serve to disguise lying, hypocrisy, or malice.

(Matth. xii. 36, 37.)—"Every idle word," in this passage, should be interpreted "every impious word." If translators have rendered the passage "every idle word," it was due to an extension given to the text to make it apply to all men,

Digitized by Google

and not to blasphemers only. This deviation from the text has resulted in bridling careless language. By speaking of "*idle* words," it condemned all language which exceeded what was just and necessary, and discouraged those frivolous conversations which might turn the mind away from the high end set before it. It was necessary to speak strongly to attain this end, and the word was changed to give it a wider extension. The day of judgment when men shall render their account is that when the guilty spirit is thrown back upon himself after death, and beholds the crimes or faults of his past life, and, under the influence of remorse and repentance, suffers the expiation which is always and inevitably followed by reincarnation.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 38–42. LUKE, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 29–32.

Sign demanded by the Pharisees.

Matth. xii. (38) Then answered him certain of the Scribes and Pharisees, saying, Teacher, we wish to see a sign from thee. (39) And he answered and said unto them, A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonah, (40) For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, even so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (41) The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold a greater than Jonah is here. (42) The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for she came from the opposite sides of the world to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here.

Luke xi. (29) And he began to say of the assembled crowds, This is a wicked generation; it seeketh a sign, and no sign shall be given unto it but the sign of Jonah the prophet. (30) For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation. (31) The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and shall condemn them, for she came from the opposite sides of the world to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here. (32) The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold a greater than Jonah is here.

§ 161. That generation which resisted every effort to lead it into the right way, was wicked and *adulterous;* for it

Digitized by Google

abandoned its faith in God to put its trust in purely external observances.

We need not now explain to you how Jesus appeared to human eyes to pass from material life to death, and his return to the spiritual life. Was not his resurrection after three days and nights of apparent death, which the vulgar took for real, a "miracle" similar to that attributed to Jonah?

We say attributed to Jonah, for the Hebrew narrative of the event was enlarged, embellished, and corrupted. The historian put a wrong interpretation on it when he said that Jonah was thrown into the sea, that God had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah; and that he remained in the belly of the fish for three days and nights, after which God spoke to the fish, and it cast Jonah on shore out of its mouth. Jonah was not thrown into the sea, but chained for three days and nights at the bottom of the vessel in which he was sailing, and was afterwards landed in a boat steered by a friendly sailor. He was thus saved by the devotion of a man who was the instrument of Providence, for he accomplished the will of God under spirit inspiration and influence, by releasing Jonah from his chains, and taking him ashore in the ship's boat; and credulity and the tendency to the marvellous soon spread abroad the report of a miraculous event. The fish was nothing but the ship which carried Jonah, and its mouth was only the boat which brought him ashore. Jesus spoke, as he always did, in accordance with human opinions concerning Jonah and himself. The Ninevites regarded Jonah, who was a man like themselves, as an exceptionally constituted being, who had been able to live for three days and nights in the body of a fish, and had emerged from it safe and sound. Jesus appeared to the vulgar, and even to his own disciples, to be a man like themselves; and his body was apparently composed of flesh and bone like theirs. Thus his resurrection and ascension appeared to them to be just as incomprehensible and miraculous as in the case of Jonah. You who are Spiritists understand the causes, and consequently the

Digitized by Google

effects, and see that the resurrection and ascension of Jesus were the natural consequences of his mission, and of his fluidic organization. It is explained by the New Revelation which we have given you of the spiritual origin of Jesus, and of his appearance on your earth, clothed with a fluidic body or tangible perisprit, having the appearance of a corporeal human body. But the men of that age saw only a body formed of corrupt matter, rising of itself, to take its place for ever where everything is spiritual. The miracle was much more obvious to men then, and we may say that it is this very impossibility of the union of matter with spirituality which has prepared for the era on which you are entering. It is this which has prevented reflecting minds from believing in miracles, for it was so inconceivable that they have sought for some possible explanation; and many have denied because they were unable to believe, but all will accept the simple and natural explanation of the tangible perisprit of the Redeemer. The veil is rent, and you now understand that when Jesus no longer desired tangibility, he resumed his ethereal essence while preserving his human appearance, and was able to emerge from the closed sepulchre, where any material human body must have remained. He could also show himself in different places, and resume his tangibility when necessary, and finally reassumed the plenitude of his spiritual faculties when he rose up before the eyes of his disciples, and returned to the ethereal sphere from which he exiled himself voluntarily to convince you, and to save you from yourselves.

(Matth. xii. 41, 42; Luke xi. 31, 32.)—In thus speaking, Jesus designed as usual to impress the imagination of his hearers by establishing a parallel between the Scriptures and the age in which he spoke. Respecting the Ninevites, it is clear that Jesus spoke only of those who profited by the preaching of Jonah, and returned to the ways of the Lord, and not of those who only heard, and then forgot it immediately. Respecting the Queen of the South: The Queen of Sheba came from the mountains of Libanus, which the Hebrews regarded as one of the extremities of the earth,

Digitized by Google

to visit Solomon, being attracted by his great reputation for wisdom, and, after having conversed with and listened to him, she said, "Your wisdom and works far exceed the report which I have heard; happy are those who are with you; happy are your servants who always stand in your presence, and listen to your wisdom! Blessed be the Lord your God, who has blessed you, and has set you on the throne of Israel, and who made you a king to rule with equity, and to dispense justice!"

The Ninevites who profited by the preaching of Jonah by returning to the ways of the Lord, and abiding in them, and the Queen of the South, who had likewise followed the impulse which had been given her, and had recognized the greatness of God, and the wisdom of him whom God had appointed king to rule with equity and to dispense justice, illustrated the condemnation of the Jews, who resisted all the efforts which Jesus made to lead them back to the right path.

After having alluded to the Scriptures to compare them with events which were then taking place, Jesus called the attention of mankind to the superiority of his mission, which was only to be fully laid open in your own days by the New Revelation. He also set forth the guilt of those who rebelled against his teaching and example by saying, "There is one here who is greater than Jonah, and greater than Solomon." Jonah and Solomon were missionary spirits, though of an inferior order. How was it possible that Jesus could compare himself to them, he, the Christ of God, and the representative of the Father, the Master and King of your planet and its humanity?

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 43–45. LUKE, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 24–28.

Evil Instincts and Passions.

Matth. xii. (43) And when the impure spirit has gone out of a man, it goes through waterless places, to seek rest, and it does not find it. (44) Then it says, I will return to my house, from which I went out, and it comes and finds it at leisure, swept and tidied. (45) Then it

Digitized by Google

goeth, and taketh with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they come in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Thus shall it be with this wicked generation.

Luke xi. (24) When the unclean spirit cometh out of the man, it wanders through waterless places to seek rest, and when it does not find it, it says, I will return to my house, whence I came forth. (25) And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. (26) Then it goeth and taketh with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first. (27) And it came to pass while he was saying these things, a woman raised her voice from the crowd, and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bear thee, and the breasts which thou hast sucked. (28) But he said, Blessed rather are these who hear the word of God, and take heed of it.

§ 162. Jesus thus taught men to keep constantly on their guard against evil passions, which, though driven away at first with comparative ease, may return one day with more strength and tenacity. You may if you please personify bad passions as evil spirits, to adopt the terms of the Evangelists, and picture them as the evil spirits whose influence you have learned to fear. A weak-minded man, who yields readily to evil inspirations, because his tendencies are evil, takes a good resolution at last, and opposes a serious obstacle to the efforts made by the malevolent spirits to lead him astray. The familiar spirit who impelled him to evil, quits him, and seeks for some other easily influenced mind which he can master; but he always keeps watch on him whom he has been obliged to abandon; and as soon as he discovers any relaxation of vigilance, or faltering in his resolutions, he returns quickly to recover possession of his victim, and if he finds the resistance feeble, and that it does not arise from any sentiment of real purity, he avenges himself, and seeks aid, if needful, from the inferior spirits who surround, and second him.

But you must not interpret our words to mean that all your bad thoughts and actions result from an occult influence. It is not so, for if the germ of evil did not exist in you, it would not attract evil spirits; but it is true that your tendencies, whether good or evil, attract spirits towards you who sympathize with those tendencies. You should therefore watch vigilantly all your most secret passions; sweep your house with care, purify your soul, and guard well the door of

Digitized by Google

the sanctuary, that you may warn off all who are unworthy to approach by prayer and watchfulness.

(Matth. xii. 43; Luke xi. 24.)—The waterless places where the evil spirit wanders without finding rest, are pure men who give no heed to his suggestions. He seeks for occupation corresponding to his instincts, tendencies, and caprices, and can find none. You must remember that Jesus spoke to the Jews, who supposed that the unclean spirit "dwelt" in the subjugated man, and he allowed them to retain the belief that they might feel a greater horror of "possession." Consequently he spoke in such a manner that these men should understand him, and represented the impure spirit as seeking for rest in waterless places, and finding none—that is, wandering among strong men, and finding them deaf to his instigations. This is the spirit of the parable when freed from the letter. Seeking to penetrate into a man, being unable to enter, and being obliged to depart without finding a resting place; that was intended as a lesson for the Jews to whom Jesus spoke.

(Matth. xii. 44; Luke xi. 24, 25.)—The man who casts out his evil tendencies from his soul, though only for a very short time, gives immediate access to the good feelings which are opposed to those evil instincts; and your virtues are the ornament of your soul, so that when the evil spirit returns to the house from which he went out, he always finds it empty, swept, and garnished. Keep your soul, by a sentiment of real purity, firm and inaccessible to evil instincts, tendencies, and passions, and consequently to evil inspirations, suggestions, and instigations. Decorate your heart with virtues that the Lord may find it a dwelling worthy of him, and may delight in gradually developing your moral and intellectual progress, by granting you the assistance and inspirations of his good spirits whom you attract to yourselves.

We do not allude to the "sacrifice of the Eucharist." All the errors of the Church have sprung from false human interpretations based upon the letter, and not upon the spirit, which have misrepresented the teachings of the

Digitized by Google

Master. Do not imagine that the human body can become the dwelling (either temporary or eternal) of the Divinity, nor that the "real body and blood" of the Saviour, according to the expressions of the Roman Church, can become assimilated to human food, and subject to the laws of human digestion. Do not suppose that the tangible peri-spirit, resembling a corporeal human body (like a precious vase containing a still more precious essence), which Jesus temporarily assumed for the necessities of his earthly mission, could become digestible human food. At the period of his "ascension," it returned to the fluids, either of the superior regions, or of your planet, from whence it was derived. Do not suppose that the spirit of Jesus, that perfectly pure and immaculate essence, could make its dwelling in the human body. No; the communion of Christ was an emblematical repast, as we shall explain to you afterwards at the proper time. It was a last solemn appeal which he made to human fraternity, and to its practice. The communion of the disciples was a commemorative repast, as a remembrance and symbol. Christians of all sects, learn by the New Revelation which God sends you, and which we bring you in the name of Christ, that to the spirit all should be spiritual. The spirit receives "the body and blood of Jesus" emblematically; "the body" to nourish its soul; "the blood" to wash it from its stains; but matter has no participation whatever in this "sacrifice."

Whether you take your food before or after this "sacrifice" matters little. The best abstinence which you can impose on yourselves before accomplishing an act which should bring your spirit symbolically nearer to him who stooped to you to raise you to himself when he appeared on your earth, is to abstain from human superfluities. Prepare yourselves for this *family feast* by some privations which may be useful to your brethren, in the material, moral, and intellectual order. Impose some moral mortifications on yourselves, and invite to this thrice-holy repast those who were alienated from you, or from whom you were alienated. Invite them in thought, if you cannot do so in reality, by pardoning their

Digitized by Google

injuries with all your heart, and by forming the irrevocable resolution never to harbour any evil thoughts against them.

Practice continually these spiritual repasts, in common, which the Master's disciples took, as they took them with the Master. They took them thus until passions and evil instincts made it requisite to alter their arrangements in order to maintain the apparent order and communion; for whoever approaches the Master's table with an evil feeling at heart is guilty of treason like Judas Iscariot.

Take this emblematic and commemorative repast as it was taken by the disciples of the Master; take it in common, intelligently desiring to feel and act fraternally towards all; invite and meet there all your brethren, Jews and Gentiles, whatever may be the external forms of religion which divide and separate you at present, and without reference to these differences of opinion; and you will thus arrive at the period which has been foretold, when men shall no longer worship in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem; but having become true Spiritists, and thus all brethren, will be the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth; the true worshippers desired by the Father, when there shall be only one fold and one shepherd; Jesus, the Christ of God, your Master, who is the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet and its humanity.

(Matth. xii. 45.)—The relapse is worse than the disease; and everything had been done to enlighten and improve the generation to which Jesus spoke. Some of them indeed were touched by the teachings of the Good Shepherd, and endeavoured to reform; but the good seed had fallen in stony places, and the evil passions, stifled for the moment, returned with renewed strength to their old dwelling, and the expiation was longer and more painful. May it not be thus with the generation to which Christ speaks to-day by the New Revelation, for he tells you, "Much will be demanded of him to whom much is given," and when those to whom the light is offered reject it, or avert or close their eyes to avoid perceiving it, they will have to render a much more severe account than those who live in ignorance and darkness.

Digitized by Google

(Luke xi. 27, 28.)—The woman who cried out to Jesus from among the people was a speaking medium, who spoke under the momentary inspiration of a guide, and thus led Jesus to reply. Everything was foreseen, to provide for the instruction of the people. The woman spoke wisely from the human point of view which regarded Jesus as the son of Mary and Joseph; and certainly if Mary had in appearance borne and suckled Jesus, this was a sign of her elevation; but her elevation was acquired before it was given her to fulfil this mission, whereas the men who surrounded Jesus were guilty sinners, who had hitherto deserved little; but it was given them to deserve much by accepting in faith, and practising, the precious lessons which they received. Jesus could thus say, "Blessed are they who receive the word of God, and practise it," for he understood the vast progress which those who entered *sincerely* on this new course were enabled to make.

We also say to you, our beloved charges, Happy are those who receive the light, and enlighten themselves by it. Those who thus hear the word of God and practise it in spirit and in truth will make great progress. Spiritists, who have been initiated during your humanity into the mysteries of life, you will shorten the time of your trials in the spiritual state, and above all, you will avoid the period of expiation, by keeping on your guard against yourselves. You will therefore progress during your human life, and you will progress still more rapidly as soon as you have returned to your real existence.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 46–50. MARK, CHAP. III.—VERSES 31–35. LUKE, CHAP. VIII. VERSES 19–21.

The brother, sister, and mother of Jesus.

Matth. xii. (46) And while he was yet speaking to the crowds, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him. (47) And some one said to him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to thee. (48) And he answered and said to him who spoke to him, Who is my mother, and who are my

Digitized by Google

brethren? (49) And stretching out his hand to his disciples, he said, Behold my mother and my brethren. (50) For whoever shall do the will of my Father in the heavens, he is my brother and sister and mother.

Mark iii. (31) Then came his brethren and his mother, and stood without, and sent to speak to him. (32) And the crowd sat round him, and they said to him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren are outside seeking thee. (33) And he answered and said to them, Who is my mother and my brother? (34) And looking round about upon those sitting round him, he saith, Behold my mother and my brethren. (35) For whoever shall do the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.

Luke viii. (19) And his mother and his brethren came to him, and could not get near him for the crowd. (20) And they sent to him, saying, Thy mother and thy brethren stand outside, desiring to see thee. (21) And he answered and said to them, My mother and my brethren are those who hear the word of God, and do it.

§ 163. Jesus, though not bound to Mary by any human ties, showed men the feelings of love and fraternity which ought to unite them.

He was the Good Shepherd who came to seek his wandering sheep; and what would be his object and desire? To gather them around him; and whatever they were, they were his beloved ones.

Jesus, whose purity and power render him, relatively to men, the only son of the Father, desired to show the crowd that he himself practised the principles which he taught, and to prove to them that all men were really sons of God, and really his brethren, provided only that they walked in the ways of the Lord. We have just called Jesus the only son of the Father in the sense that he is the most exalted spirit who watches over your planet. His pure essence, which has never fallen, approximates him to the nature of the universal Creator; and his unlimited power over everything which concerns your world partakes of the power of the Sovereign Master, with whom his purity places him in direct communion.

Mary and those who were called the brethren of Jesus undertook this journey under the spiritual influence of their guardian angels, combined with the personal thought that they must seek Jesus, to provide him with the means of nourishing the body. Mary, although a very elevated spirit, was yet subject to the influence of the matter which surrounded her, up to a certain point; and could not understand

Digitized by Google

that Jesus could endure such long-continued fatigue without taking the food requisite to sustain the body. She had the intuition of her coming fate; but the past was with her as with you, covered with the veil of the flesh.

We cannot remind you too often that Mary as well as Joseph were led (in consequence of the revelation which had been made to them, and which was intended to be kept secret till after the accomplishment of the earthly mission of the Master) to regard Jesus as an exceptional being, great in the sight of God; as the son of the Most High; the son of God, miraculously incarnated, but nevertheless participating in humanity, and subject to the necessities of human existence. In the eyes of men, Jesus was a man like themselves, and the son of Joseph and Mary; and he was thus regarded during all his earthly mission, until the time when this revelation, which had previously remained secret, became known to the multitude.

Mary and the so-called brethren of Jesus were inspired to go to him that they might give occasion for the Master's reply. The versions of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are exact, and mutually complete each other. Jesus stretched out his hand towards his disciples, and made his answer, looking round on the crowd with the powerful attraction of his gaze, the magnetic radiance of which attracted their attention as the loadstone attracts iron. Jesus designated his disciples as an example, and thus drew upon them the attention of the crowd who ought to imitate them.

When Jesus made this reply, his thought embraced the present and the future. His first object was, having regard to the motive which led to the journey of Mary and his brethren, to prove to men that his mission was above the family ties and the needs of human existence which they supposed to exist in his case. At the same time he desired to indicate, under a veil, that he was not bound to Mary and her companions by any human ties, and that there only existed the same spiritual bond and relationship between them, as between himself, his disciples, the multitude, and the human race in general. He also desired

Digitized by Google

to show that a bond of relationship and brotherhood according to the spirit, and not according to the flesh, was a reality which actually existed between himself and men, as well as between men themselves, with respect to those who should have done the will of his Father by listening to and obeying the word of God, whose messenger and representative he was.

He designed to prepare men to receive the New Revelation which we now bring you, at the time which he foretold. It frees the spirit from the letter and reveals his spiritual origin, his mission, and his powers as the delegate and representative of the Father towards your planet, at the formation of which he presided. He will complete its progress and destiny, and will also lead your humanity in the paths of progress, through charity, love, and knowledge, to perfection. He thus shows men that he is their brother in spirit and in truth, and also their Master, by his unlimited power over everything which concerns your planet.

He thus designed to prepare men to abandon the human belief in his divinity, when the time had come, through the teachings of the New Revelation. He foresaw that this belief would become general after the fulfilment of his earthly mission, conformably with the state of intelligence, the impressions, aspirations, and human interpretations of the period; for this belief was to be a condition and means of progress, which would be useful in the present, and preparatory to the advent of the new era which now opens before you.

The expressions in Matthew xii. 47, &c., taken in conjunction with Matth. xiii. 55, 56, i. 25, Mark vi. 3, have led many to suppose that Joseph and Mary had other children besides Jesus.

This view has been shown to be erroneous by the discussions which have been carried on to your own times, and it should not now be revived. It should find no place in human discussions and controversies, after the New Revelation concerning the spiritual origin of Jesus, the circumstances of his appearance on the earth, the nature and

Digitized by Google

character of his mission in the past, present, and future, and of the elevation and purity of Mary and Joseph, and the nature and character of the mission which they fulfilled in the progress of the work.

Those who were called the brothers and sisters of Jesus were (not in reality, but in the eyes of men) only his near relations. The word *brother* in Hebrew had several meanings, and signified sometimes "brother," properly so-called, sometimes "cousin," and sometimes "relative." Among the Hebrews, children who were descended in the same direct line were regarded as brothers; if not actually, at least nominally. The Hebrews generally designated the children of brothers, whom you now call cousins, as brothers and sisters. Mary was not an only child; she had a sister, also called Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and the mother of James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas, who were called the brothers of Jesus.

What difference would it have made to men if Jesus had had brothers and sisters, humanly speaking? They would not have partaken of the essence of Jesus, the perfect spirit, who was visibly incarnated to human eyes by the tangible perisprit, presenting a bodily human appearance, which he assumed for the requirements and for the period of his earthly mission.

But it was not thus. Joseph and Mary were very elevated spirits, who endured the burden of the existence which they had accepted, but without being subject to unnecessary instincts. They were exiled for a time from their true country, but they had an intuitive remembrance of it, and all their wishes tended to return to it.

Mary was intuitively prepared for the mission which she was to fulfil in that great work of regeneration, of which the result was an example to all succeeding ages. She was and remained a virgin; and Joseph, though less elevated than Mary, understood the object of his material existence from the revelation of the angel, and wholly consecrated himself to his sacred mission.

Men have thought that the expression "first-born son" proved that Mary had other children besides Jesus; but, as

Digitized by Google

in the case of the expressions "brothers" and "sisters," the Hebrew word is capable of more than one interpretation; and the "first-born son" or the "only son" would, in Hebrew phraseology, be expressed by the same word; for the only child could not but be the first. If you could revert to Hebrew words and modes of expression, you would find this to be the correct explanation. The expression "first-born son" was used indifferently by the Hebrews to express the birth of a first child, whether his birth was followed by others or not. Words are often employed to express more than one idea, according to the context.

The Hebrew* expression (Matth. i. 25) used by the Evangelist here, signifies only that Mary had had no children previously. The term was not used with any idea of the considerations and interpretations which men have sought for in it, and hence it appears faulty to you. It was only employed to sum up what had been previously expressed, to emphasize the fact of Mary having been a virgin, and to reassert that the birth of Jesus was solely due to the operation of the Holy Spirit. You now know, through what we have revealed to you of the manner of the appearance of Jesus on the earth, the real meaning of these words; and our previous explanations have also shown you how Mary remained a virgin, notwithstanding the apparent "birth," due to the operation of the Holy Spirit, and to the influence of spiritual magnetism; which was only apparent, although taken for real by herself and others.

Jesus was the first-born and only son. After the fulfilment of his earthly mission, the Hebrews understood the term "first-born" to imply that his birth had been followed by others, as they did not wish to admit that his life was of a special character, as the revelation which had first been kept secret, and afterwards made public and subjected to human interpretations, had affirmed. But you, as Christians, have confined yourselves to the true sense of "only son;" and hence we say that Jesus is the only son *to you.*

* The Gospels, as we have them, are in Greek; but that of Matthew at least is believed to have been originally written in Hebrew.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 1–23. MARK, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 1–20, 25. LUKE, CHAP. VIII. VERSES 1–15, 18. CHAP. X.—VERSES 23, 24.

Parable of the Sower.

Matth. xiii. (1) And on the same day Jesus went out of the house, and sat down by the lake. (2) And large crowds gathered to him, so that he entered the boat and sat down, and the whole multitude stood on the shore. (3) And he taught them many things in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went forth to sow. (4) And as he was sowing, some fell near the road, and the birds came and devoured it. (5) But some fell in the rocky places, and immediately it sprang up, for it had no depth of earth. (6) But when the sun had risen, it was scorched, and having no root, it was destroyed. (7) But some fell among thistles, and the thistles sprang up and choked it. (8) But some fell on good ground, and yielded fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold. (9) He that hath ears to hear let him hear. (10) And his disciples came to him, and said, Wherefore dost thou speak to them in parables? (11) And he answered and said to them, Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but it is not given to these. (12) For to whomsoever hath, it shall be given unto him,' and he shall have abundance, and whomsoever hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him. (13) Therefore I speak to them in parables, that seeing they shall not see, and hearing they shall not hear, nor understand. (14) And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not comprehend, and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. (15) For the heart of this people is frozen, and they hear dully with their ears, and they have closed their eyes, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should repent, and I should heal them. (16) But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. (17) For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and just men have desired to see what you see, and have not seen, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard. (18) Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. (19) As for every one who heareth the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the wicked one cometh, and snatcheth away that which was sown in his heart; this is he who received the seed near the road. (20) But he who received the seed in stony places, is he who heareth the word, and immediately receiveth it with joy. (21) And he has no root in himself, but is a timeserver, and when affliction or persecution cometh on account of the word, he is immediately offended. (22) And he who receiveth seed among thistles is he who heareth the word, and the cares of this age and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. (23) And he who receiveth the seed on good soil, is he who heareth the word and understandeth it, who then yields fruit, and produces some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold.

Mark iv. (1) And he went again to teach near the lake, and a great crowd gathered to him, so that he embarked in the boat on the lake, and sat down, and all the crowd was on land near the lake. (2) And he taught them many things in parables, and said to them in his

Digitized by Google

teaching, (3) Give heed, Behold, the sower went forth to sow. (4) And it came to pass that while he was sowing, some fell near the road, and the birds of heaven came and devoured it. (5) But some fell on rocky places, where there was not much earth, and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. (6) But when the sun arose, it was scorched, and having no root, it was destroyed. (7) And others fell among thistles, and the thistles sprang up and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. (8) And other fell on good soil, and yielded fruit, springing up and increasing, and bore some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some an hundredfold. (9) And he said to them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. (10) And when he was alone, those who were around him with the twelve asked him about the parable. (11) And he said to them, To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those without all these things are in parables. (12) That seeing they may see, and may not perceive, and hearing they may hear and may not understand, lest at any time they should repent, and should be delivered from their sins. (13) And he saith to them, Do ye not understand this parable? and how will you understand all the parables? (14) The sower soweth the word. (15) And these are them near the road. When the word is sown and they do not listen, then cometh Satan, and snatcheth away that which was sown in their hearts. (16) And these are like those who were sown in stony places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy, (17) And have no root in themselves, but are time-servers; then cometh affliction or persecution through the word, and they are immediately offended. (18) And these are they who were sown among thistles: these are they who hear the word, (19) And the cares of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire of other things having entered in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (20) And these are they who were sown on good ground, who hear the word and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some an hundredfold. (25) For whomsoever hath, to him it shall be given; and whomsoever hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him.

Luke viii. (1) And it came to pass afterwards that he went through town and village, preaching, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. (2) And the twelve were with him, and certain women who had been healed by him of evil spirits and infirmities; Mary who is called Magdalene, from whom he cast out seven demons, (3) And Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who supplied him from their possessions. (4) And a large crowd having assembled, from those who had gone out to him from the city, he spoke to them in parables. (5) The sower went out to sow his seed, and as he was sowing, some fell near the path, and was trodden under foot, and the winged things of heaven devoured it. (6) And some fell on the rock, and having grown, it was uprooted, because it had no moisture. (7) And some fell in the midst of the thistles, and the thistles grew up with it, and choked it. (8) And some fell on the good soil, and grew up, and yielded fruit an hundredfold. Speaking these things, he said, Let him hear who hath ears to hear. (9) And his disciples questioned him, saying, What may this parable be? (10) And he said, To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and that hearing they may not hear. (11) And this is the parable; the seed is the word of God. (12) And those near the road are those who hear; then cometh the devil, and snatcheth away the word from their hearts, lest they

Digitized by Google

should believe and be saved. (13) And those on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root. They believe for a time, and in time of temptation they stand aloof. (14) And those falling among thistles are those who hear, and going away, are choked by the deceitfulness of riches and of the pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to perfection. (15) And those in the good soil are those who listen with a good and pure heart. They receive the word, and bring forth fruit in patience. (18) Take heed, therefore, how you hear; for to whomsoever hath, it shall be given unto him, and from whomsoever hath not, even that which he seemeth to have shall be taken away from him.

Luke x. (23) And turning his gaze towards his disciples, he said, Blessed are your seeing eyes which see. (24) For I say unto you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things which you see, and they have not seen, and to hear the things which you hear, and they have not heard.

§ 164. The parable of the sower requires no explanation. That which Jesus gave to his disciples, as far as they were able to receive it in the incarnate state, for the fulfilment of their mission, is enough to enable you to understand it. Nevertheless it will be useful for you who are Spiritists, or about to become so, to receive special explanations developing the whole meaning of the words of Jesus, by freeing the spirit from the letter. But we must first teach you how to understand the words spoken by Jesus to the multitude in the parable, and those addressed to the Apostles as its explanation; for some words here spoken by the gentle and indulgent Master—the Good Shepherd, who would not desire that one of his sheep should be lost—seem to contradict all the actions of his apparently human life.

The generation of spirits who lived at the time of the mission of Jesus, was composed of proud and vain spirits, wilfully blind and deaf, rebellious to all authority, and who, even before incarnation, had rejected every opportunity offered them to improve themselves. They were the children of the Hebrews who had marched from Egypt; spirits who had continued their experiences for centuries without losing the tendency to revolt and murmuring which was characteristic of the Hebrews from the very commencement of their nationality. If they had been capable of receiving the unveiled truth, they would have made themselves still more guilty by refusing to submit to it.

Digitized by Google

How admirable is the foreseeing goodness of this pattern of perseverance and gentleness, who spared the rash and rebellious child the punishment which he had deserved, by not imposing a command upon him which he knew him to be unable to bear!

As the words of Jesus were veiled, those who wished to improve themselves could, like the Apostles, attempt to discover their hidden meaning. Those, on the contrary, who would have been unwilling to bow to a law which imposed too heavy a reformation on their evil natures, were only guilty of indifference in not attempting to fathom mysteries which they did not understand.

When Jesus said that he only spoke to them in parables and similitudes, lest they might repent, he spoke of those who would be drawn into the movement on the first impulse, and would have made an effort to advance, but would soon have been arrested by their evil instincts, and have relapsed in such a manner as to draw upon themselves a severer punishment. For you must remember that much is given to him who already possesses something. He who desires progress and struggles to deserve it will be upheld on all sides; but from him who hath not, even the little that he hath shall be taken away, because he is careless about keeping what has been given to him, and neglects it, and allows bad passions to take possession of his heart; and instead of the few virtues which he might have possessed, and which he has neglected, he will be assailed by vices and evils which will oppress him for centuries.

Although the explanation of the parable which Jesus gave to his disciples was made public in the Gospels, as well as by the apostles and disciples, it was only after the fulfilment of his earthly mission, when the multitude had been strongly impressed by the words which he had spoken, and the actions which he performed up to the period of his "Ascension." They were thus prepared to hear the explanation with profit from the apostles and disciples; as well as other lessons which the Master had given them, in the degree and manner in which they were able to receive it. They were

Digitized by Google

also prepared to receive the Gospel narrative at a later period, which, moreover, was intended to be the book of progress, for all ages, either under the dominion of the letter, or of the spirit; for it is the source from which light and truth must always radiate.

(Matth. xiii. 10–13; Mark iv. 11–20, 25; Luke viii. 10–18.)—The following words express the thought of the Master, when the spirit is freed from the letter, apart from all uncertainty respecting the meaning of the text.

"To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, and the secrets of the kingdom of God; but to them it has not been given, but has only been laid before them in parables." At the period when Jesus spoke, it was given to the apostles and disciples to know these mysteries, because they were more elevated spirits than the men around them, and were prepared to disseminate the truths which Jesus brought to the world; and in order that they might do so, it was necessary that they should first understand them; and he gave them only what they were able to receive, and needed for the accomplishment of their mission.

It is the same in your own age. Your intelligence has advanced, and we bring you revelations of the invisible world, the secrets of the kingdom of God; and we will enable you to understand them, that you in your turn may be able to diffuse this knowledge throughout the world, and that you also may go from town to town, and from village to village, preaching repentance, and proclaiming like the disciples, "Hasten, for the time is at hand."

The expressions, "The kingdom of the heavens," "the kingdom of God," are images to express the happiness of the blessed; for to attract the attention of those who regard only matter, it is needful to present a material figure of that other life, which they would be unable to comprehend if it were shown to them in its full spirituality.

"The mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens," and "the secrets of the kingdom of God," were the knowledge, previously unknown, of the means of attaining it. Until the

Digitized by Google

revelations of Jesus, men had never formed a definite idea of the other life; and their very vague intuitions regarding it had left them indifferent about the happiness and mode of existence which they might hope for beyond the tomb. Jesus came to raise the veil, and to enlighten their intelligence, but the veil was only lifted, and the light was still veiled. At the present day, we are continuing to raise the veil which hides the other life from you; and although it may not yet be raised entirely, we allow the light to shine brighter; for your eyes are stronger, and better able to bear it. But it does not yet shine in all its lustre; you are not yet prepared to receive a complete revelation; and the man would be very presumptuous who fancied that he had fathomed the depths of these mysteries, which are impenetrable to your human intelligences. Even you who are Spiritists must wait till you have arrived at the age of reason to receive all the revelations of the invisible world. Let your hearts seek to understand, enlarge the circle of your knowledge, and develop your intelligence; and when the right time has come, you shall know all the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, and all the secrets of the kingdom of God.

You will know them when you have attained to complete moral purity; and by acquiring this you will gradually obtain a knowledge of the omnipotence, justice, goodness, and infinite mercy of God, and of his designs and works in infinite space; of the elements, and of the active properties of the fluids, as well as the knowledge of the means by which you may obtain the favours of the Lord, by attaining the good which leads to success, and avoiding the evil which must be punished.

(Matth. xiii. 12; Mark iv. 25; Luke viii. 18.)—You know that the spirit who clothes himself in a fleshly envelope brings with him the treasure which he has been able to gather in previous existences, and you can understand that this treasure would increase much more rapidly when it was based on solid foundations. He who is born with the ardent desire of advancing rapidly will make every effort to succeed; and the light will be so much the greater for him,

Digitized by Google

as he desires more ardently to see it. We repeat that much will be given to him who hath abundance; that is, he who longs for progress and strives to attain it will be upheld on all sides.

(Matth. xiii. 12; Mark iv. 25; Luke viii. 18.)—These words must be understood according to the spirit, and not according to the letter; for Jesus added, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." They were intended to render his address still more striking to the human intelligence of his hearers; and he only expressed himself thus to give more emphasis to the image. However little progress an incarnate spirit may have made before his arrival on your globe, he has always acquired some. The concealed thought of the Master was this: "From whomsoever hath little, shall be taken away even that he hath; and from him who hath not, and believes he hath, shall be taken away even that which he believes he hath."

As we have already told you, the reason of this is, that he who has little is careless about taking care of what has been given him. When he has neglected the virtues which he might have possessed, they will be replaced by vices which will oppress him for ages, for evil is actually rooted in the neglect of the practice of good. Men, who refuse alms to the wretched with indifference, it is not your evil heart which urges you, but a kind of mental torpor, which hinders you from perceiving the good which you might be able to accomplish; and you are therefore wanting in charity. He who enters upon a course which he knows to be evil, and neglects to quit it from indifference, will fall into all the snares which hedge his path. He who is not devoted, becomes selfish; he who is not charitable, becomes hard; he who is not humble in mind and heart, becomes proud and boastful; he who is not resigned to the will of God, becomes rebellious, and murmurs against his decrees; thus evil is always the consequence of good neglected. The spirit does not retrograde, but it remains stationary, which amounts to the same thing as regards its active and progressive essence.

Digitized by Google

He who has not gathered, and brings little from his former existences when he begins his human life, will grow still more negligent. He has no desire to advance, and as he does not acquire anything, he loses in the sense that stagnation at length becomes a source of pain and remorse to the spirit.

You are destined to unceasing progress, and you should therefore march forward, but with humility of heart and soul, and urged by no other motive than the love of God and the neighbour. Pray always to God to uphold your desire for moral and intellectual progress, and that he may permit you to labour for him alone, by aiding in the moral and intellectual progress of your brethren. Ask, for the more you ask the more you shall receive; and the more you exert yourselves, the more will your path be smoothed of the obstacles which now impede you. It is in this sense that much is given to him who hath much already, and that he who hath little is deprived, or rather deprives himself, of what he hath already; for the want of progress is a hundred times worse to the spirit than the loss of his treasure to the greedy miser.

"From him who hath not, shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have." In these words, Jesus strove to counteract the inborn pride in men, who, however little they may deserve, always rate themselves far above their real worth. After death, the spirit sees clearly at length what it is, and what it is worth; and then its pride becomes a source of pain and remorse to it, on account of the obstacle which it has imposed to its progress, and the faults to which it has led. It is in this sense also that from him who hath not shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have, or rather he robs himself by his own act, under the burden of expiation.

(Matth. xiii. 13, 14; Mark iv. 11, 12; Luke viii. 10.)—The interpretation of these words is falsified by the deficiencies of your language, and by copyists and translators. The sense and import of the idea, apart from all uncertainty in the interpretation of the text, is contained in the words of

Digitized by Google

Jesus, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." When his words are correctly understood in spirit and in truth, they do not and can not contradict all the actions of his apparently human life.

In the eyes of Jesus, the Shepherd of wandering souls, the men of that age were like green fruits, which too hot a sun would have withered instead of ripening, but the gardener carefully shades them till they have had time to grow; and then, when they have once arrived at the point of maturity, the rays of light and heat which have previously been withheld from them are allowed to ripen them with their beneficent influence.

Jesus himself says, "Many are called, but few are chosen;" not according to the human interpretation which the Churches give of these words, that he has drawn all men around him to select only a small number, and relegate the great bulk of mankind to the place of torment where "there is wailing and gnashing of teeth," but because they are hard and green fruits, and can only be brought gradually to the beneficent sun which must develop and ripen them; and for this object, the sun veils his light and heat.

Do you speak to a little child as you speak to a man? Do you propound moral and philosophical questions which you will make him understand when he is twenty years old? No, you speak to him in such a manner as to attract his young intelligence, always allowing him to perceive that you will tell him more at a later period, and teach him what he is too young and ignorant to receive rationally. Do you act thus to hinder his progress, or that he should be unable to understand or to learn when he is once a man? Not so; it is because the fruit is green, and that you regulate the light and heat for him, lest the excess of these two beneficent principles should act too early, and should weaken him instead of strengthening him.

You can understand that Jesus, in his overflowing mercy, could not voluntarily deprive human creatures of the chance of salvation which he offered them; on the contrary, his words always gave indolent spirits the excuse of not under-

Digitized by Google

standing, lest they should be drawn into a fault; and the verses which we have quoted from the three Gospels must be considered to be only a mode of speaking addressed to the intelligence of the men of that age.

The Apostles were surprised at the veiled language of the Master, which seemed to them to be confused, and sought for an explanation. Jesus could not tell them the motives which guided his conduct, for they were themselves to be the future instruments of his work, and were to receive only what they were able, and required at that time for the success and accomplishment of their mission in the circumstances which were prepared for it.

Consequently Jesus gave them a reason which would satisfy them, and also inspire them with pity for those whom the will of the Master left in the darkness of the parable, and moved them with greater love and gratitude towards him who had chosen them to be initiated into these mysteries.

Surely he who came to teach men to expiate their offences, could not help freely pardoning the offences of the guilty; but where there is no repentance, there can be no remission of offences. Jesus foresaw that they would relapse, and avoided undervaluing the faults of those who might have entered on a new course hastily and without reflection, and would thus have seemed to men to deserve the remission of their sins. But being unrepentant and weak, they would soon have fallen back into a worse state than the first, and would thus have deserved a more severe punishment. Jesus desired to save them from this, and in his provident goodness, he adapted the chances of falling to the rebellious, and also adapted the chances of ingratitude to hardened and ungrateful offenders.

You know that during the mission of Christ, the "miracles" which he performed on the sick made a great impression on the minds of the spectators; but many who were struck by them at the time, only regarded the material act; and just as you rarely retain much gratitude towards the skilful surgeon who has saved you from danger, thus the

Digitized by Google

patients of the physician of souls soon forgot the material or spiritual aid which they had received. Thus Jesus avoided the subject of "miracles," and only spoke of them in a veiled manner, when among surroundings where he knew that his acts and preaching could bear no fruit as long as the ground was barren, and could only produce ephemeral flowers.

It is just the same spiritually. The incarnate spirit who neglects the light and does not seek to approach it, will be punished by his own indifference; but he who is attracted by its blessed rays, and begins to enlighten himself, and then shuts his eyes and recoils from it, will have to expiate his wavering and his treason towards himself; not because the Lord lets his vengeance fall specially on him, but on account of his own remorse, caused by the incessant sight of the good which he might have done, and the progress which he might have made. This floats continually before his eyes like a prize which escapes him at the moment that he expected to grasp it.

You cannot draw back. If you once enter on this path you must advance unceasingly, holding out both your hands right and left to aid those who cannot advance alone. Act with prudence and reflection, and always say to those who would follow you, "We march forward without stopping; for he who stops, draws back, and he who draws back, falls."

(Matthew xiii. 18, 19; Mark iv. 16; Luke x. 23, 24.)—Jesus here alludes to incarnate spirits. The prophets and just men of whom he spoke foresaw the coming of the Messiah, and would have been happy if it had taken place during their incarnation.

(Matthew xiii. 18, 19; Mark iv. 15; Luke x. 12.)—Here, "the word of the kingdom" denotes the instructions given by Jesus to teach men how to fit themselves for the kingdom of the heavens; for although he was not God himself, he could nevertheless speak personally the word of the heavens, being the delegate of God, made flesh to the eyes of men, who believed him to be incarnate like them-

Digitized by Google

selves in a bodily human envelope; but in reality made flesh in the sense of being visibly incarnated in a tangible perisprit, or incorruptible body.

The expressions, "the wicked one; Satan; the devil," used to express the same idea, are synonymous, and under a figurative name and as an emblem, they express the evil spirits of error and lying; the inferior, impure, thoughtless, or perverse spirits. When Jesus spoke of the wicked one snatching away the word of the kingdom from the hearts of men, lest they should believe and be saved, he alluded to the evil spirits who gather round those who do not resist them, and who strive to prevent their rising above the unsatisfactory condition in which they find themselves.

The human belief in the personification called Satan, with his eternal hell, was originally due to the necessity of materializing such emblems, to render them tangible to matter, and was a curb, and a means of salutary terror during the previous ages through which mankind has passed.

Would you prevent the human spirit from modifying truths according to its necessities? Would you prevent man from making use of man? the intelligent from domineering over the credulous? the strong from crushing the weak, and making use of every means in his power for this end? And what means could be more suitable for this purpose than terror, in the age of ignorance and barbarism when the reign of Lucifer began; a means which could appeal as powerfully to the prejudices of the strong as to the weak? a yoke which rested on all shoulders alike, and a curb which overmastered all natures?

Do not find fault; that which has been in antiquity among the Hebrews, and then among yourselves, was to be. The law of love, gentleness, and charity, and the law of Reincarnation which we now reveal to you openly, both in its principle and in its consequences, shows you the path which you must traverse to enter, pure and holy, into the kingdom of the heavens, or in other words, arrive at perfection through reparation, expiation and progress. It likewise shows you the God of love, the good Father of

Digitized by Google

all, leading you thus to himself, through his omnipotence, and under the influence of his infinite justice, goodness, and mercy. But such teachings would have had no restraining power in former ages.

It was needful to oppose the fire of human passions by a fire yet more consuming, which might inspire terror in those iron men who would otherwise have devoured each other without mercy. That which has been, was to be; the source was good, but man has troubled it, and the gloom of human passions has continued to darken it. We now re-establish the brightness of the pure stream by the New Revelation; and the source of life, instead of rushing over the rocks which it has carried away, will now flow clear and peacefully over the golden sand which will form its bed.

Away with these vain terrors of barbarous ages, though useful then! Away with the oppression of man by man; the ignorant must no longer be the prey of the instructed, for knowledge must become universal; the strong must no longer crush the weak, for he should only make use of his strength to aid him; the powerful shall no longer trample down the lowly, but shall anxiously stoop to lift him in his arms, and aid him to raise his head towards heaven.

Every age has had its own developments, all designed to contribute to the progress of humanity. Compare, judge and profit by them, but do not find fault.

(Matthew xiii. 20, 21; Mark iv. 16, 17; and Luke viii. 13.)—Those who fall away in time of temptation are those who yield to the opportunities which present themselves of falling back into their old practices, and thus again become deaf and rebellious to the word of God; and a fresh prey to their faults and errors, under the influence of evil spirits who stimulate the evil desires which they are unable to resist. Those who are immediately offended when trouble or persecution come on account of the word are those who are wanting in energy, and are terrified at trouble or persecution, and draw back. In thus speaking to the Apostles and disciples, Jesus alluded to both physical and moral

Digitized by Google

tribulations and persecutions. From a spiritual point of view all tribulations and persecutions are moral. It is ridicule which is poured upon the doctrine and its sectaries. We say sectaries in allusion to the false, though currently received opinion, that you who simply seek for light and truth in the way marked out by Jesus, are trying to found a new sect. There are a thousand snares with which they oppose you, and they will continue to do so for a time; for hitherto, friends, you have walked on roses,* and scarcely a thorn has shown itself; but the period when you will be met by serious opposition is approaching; the Church and its adherents will rise like a barrier to arrest your efforts, and the barrier will be so much the more formidable, because it will always appear to vanish at your approach, to rise up still more formidably immediately; but its efforts will be in vain. The ridicule which it endeavours to use against you will recoil upon itself; the anathema which it will launch against you will recoil upon itself; and you will one day behold it, humbled by its fruitless efforts, open its gates to receive you, and turn to you yourselves to ask for the light which it has sought to turn into darkness.

It is these little oppositions which rise up, and frighten those who are without energy, and who dare not brave public opinion when they find it opposed to themselves; and who shrink before the family warfare which has arisen, and will rise up more and more; for we tell you to-day, like Jesus, that we do not come to bring peace but division. Let not those who are exposed to this domestic opposition be offended, and abandon the cause which they have taken up; for their prospects would be imperilled; and your prospects, Spiritists, are peace and progress, and an eternal farewell to the miseries of your earth. Do not therefore abandon your cause.

Reply gently to private attacks, and answer public attacks with reason, firmness, and dignity, and adopt as your motto,

* These words were medianimically dictated on Dec. 18, 1862. (ED.) Compare vol. i. p. 328, and note.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

Patience and resignation. If you are sustained by faith, you will overcome all the obstacles which oppose you, and which will crumble under your feet like a heap of sand. Take courage, and do not be offended, for you have no right to draw back.

(Matthew xiii. 22; Mark iv. 18; Luke viii. 14.)—Those in whom the word is stifled by the cares of the world, and who yield no fruit, are those who sacrifice everything to the material instincts and appetites which cause matter to predominate over spirit, or even make spirit subservient to matter.

(Matthew xiii. 23; Mark iv. 20; Luke viii. 15.)—Those sown upon good ground are those who strive, each according to his intellectual and moral development, to practise the word of God sown in their hearts, first by his Christ, and then by the Spirit of Truth. These are they who cultivate his word with patience; that is, those who having evil tendencies to contend with, use all their perseverance to repress them, and to replace them by the good seed.

There is nothing selfish in the law of love. Jesus preached before the multitude, that his words might be heard, and fall upon good ground. You also, new disciples of the Master, should raise your voice to-day, whenever you can hope to make it heard. The seed which the good soil has yielded should be sown again in its turn, that every seed which has been gathered may give birth to another abundant harvest. This is the thought of Jesus; and he who represents the good ground, and has received the good seed, ought, when he collects it for himself, to make use of the seed which he has gathered by sowing it among his brethren, that it may lead to the same intellectual and moral development among them that he himself has acquired. This he must do first by example, and then by precept and teaching.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 24–30.

Parable of the Darnel in the Field.

(24) He laid before them another parable, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is like unto a man sowing good seed in his field. (25) And while the men slept, his enemy came and sowed darnel among the corn, and went away. (26) And when the corn grew up, and bore seed, then appeared the darnel also. (27) And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, Master, did you not sow good seed in your field; whence then has it darnel? (28) And he said to them, An unfriendly man has done this. And the servants said to him, Then do you wish us to go and gather them? (29) And he said, No, lest in gathering the darnel you root out the corn with it. (30) Let both grow together till the harvest, and at harvest-time I will say to the reapers, Gather first the darnel, and bind it in bundles to burn it, but gather the corn into my granary.

§ 165. Spirits are not all at the same stage of development. Some among you are pupils, while others are at the commencement of their moral experiences. Would it then be necessary, in order to effect the renovation of your spiritual generation, to overwhelm the whole material generation by a new deluge like that described by the ancients? Not so; the darnel grows side by side with the good corn, but at each harvest, the darnel is sent to be purified in the fire of expiation, and the good corn is gathered into the granaries of the Lord. Do not misunderstand us when we spoke of the deluge as it has been described. We only intended to present the idea of a universal catastrophe to your minds; for if there had ever been such a deluge as that recorded by tradition, we should not have said "as the ancients have described it." There was no universal deluge, for there has never been a universal cataclysm, but often partial renovations. The successive transformations which have happened from the time that your planet arose from incandescent vapours till your own days were successively designed for the preparation and progress of the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, and subsequently of the human kingdom, in order to prepare for the future purification and transformation of the planetary, mineral, vegetable, animal and human fluids, by progressive, gradual, and continuous steps. At every stage in the progress of humanity, the ele-

Digitized by Google

ments must change their nature; matter must become purified, and must progress under the action of spirit; and the earth must provide for the necessities of the generations of men who live upon it.

"The enemy of the master of the house," who sowed the darnel was an expression adapted to the comprehension of those who listened to the parable. Was it not necessary that they should be able to understand it?

In speaking thus, Jesus alluded to the evil intelligences, whether incarnate or not, who seek to destroy the good seed which the good spirits have sown in the heart of man. Thus the darnel grows up beside the good corn, for the good corn (that is, the pure heart) rejects the bad seed, and its contact cannot injure it.

When the servants inquired, "Do you wish us to go and weed out the darnel?" the master answered, "No, lest in gathering the darnel you root out the corn with it." In this part of the parable Jesus desired to restrain the zeal of the Apostles, who might have been urged on too far by the desire of advancing humanity, and in the endeavour to repress abuses, might have alarmed well-meaning but simple men, and have turned them aside.*

This is a lesson both for the present and the future. The great secret in teaching eternal truths is to appropriate them to the intelligence of those who are to receive them; otherwise those who would have accepted the principle if it had been presented to them in a form in accordance with their own point of view, may be repelled from it, either because they are dazzled by its splendour, or because it appears to be surrounded by too great difficulties.

(V. 30.)—The harvest is the period when spirits quit their fleshly envelope, and return to the world of spirits. If they are in the condition of darnel to be burned, they first suffer expiation in the errant state, and are purified in the fire of moral sufferings and tortures, and are then sent to

* As missionaries discourage the taste for flowers, and other harmless, if not elevating tendencies, among the natives of the South Sea Islands and elsewhere.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

redeem and expiate the past, and to progress by means of new experiences, and are reincarnated either in worlds inferior to yours, or on your own, according to their tendencies, and their guilt. But those who are in the condition of the good corn which is to be gathered into the granary, are sent to higher worlds than yours, to perfect themselves, and to advance further by means of fresh experiences.

From this double point of view, the harvest is constantly taking place, both in the past, the present, and the future. Again, the definite period of the harvest as regards your planet will be the time when the darnel will no longer be permitted to grow on your earth beside the good corn, but will be uprooted and cast out by the expulsion of all the guilty spirits who have remained rebellious, who will be removed from your planet, and cast down to the inferior planets, when your earth will no longer produce anything but good corn, having become part of the kingdom of God, reserved exclusively for the residence of good spirits. In this passage, the reapers are the superior spirits who are charged with watching over the expiations of guilty spirits in the errant state, and with the classifying of those who have passed through their experiences well, and have deserved admission into worlds higher than your earth.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 31–35. MARK, CHAP. IV.—VERSES 26–34. LUKE, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 18–22.

The Grain of Mustard-Seed—The Leaven and the Meal.—Seed sown in the Ground.

Matth. xiii. (31) He laid before them another parable, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is like a mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, (32) Which is indeed the least of all seeds, but when it has grown, it is larger than the herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of heaven come and rest in its branches. (33) He spoke another parable to them: The kingdom of the heavens is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. (34) All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and without a parable spoke he not unto them. (35) That the word spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been concealed from the foundation of the world.

Digitized by Google

Mark iv. (26) And he said, Thus is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, (27) And should lie down and rise up by night and day, and the seed should grow and increase when he is not looking; (28) For the earth bringeth forth fruit of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. (29) And when the grain is ripe, immediately he sends the sickle, for the harvest has come. (30) And he said, To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? or by what parable shall I symbol it? (31) As a mustard-seed, which when it is sown in the earth, is the least of all the seeds on the earth, (32) And when it is sown, it springs up and becomes larger than all the herbs, and shoots out great branches, so that the birds of heaven can rest under its shadow. (33) And he spoke the word to them in many such parables, as they were able to listen. (34) And without a parable spake he not to them, and when he was alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

Luke xiii. (18) And he said, To what is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it? (19) It is like a mustard-seed which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew and became a great tree, and the birds of heaven rested in its branches. (20) And he said again, To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? (21) It is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened. (22) And he went through towns and villages, preaching, and making his way towards Jerusalem.

§ 166. By the parable in which he compared the kingdom of the heavens to a mustard-seed, Jesus showed the multitude that however small might be the starting-point towards the heavens, it might nevertheless develop itself, and lead to great results.

Such was the end and object of this parable, so far as it referred to the period at which Jesus spoke; but his thought had reference both to the present and to the future. From a spiritual point of view, the kingdom of the heavens is compared to a mustard-seed which became a great tree, on which the birds rested, as a metaphor. By the mustard-seed you must understand the original starting-point of your planet and its humanity, in their rudimentary condition. The secret development of the mustard-seed is the formation of the earth, and its appearance, growth, and transformation into a great tree typify the laws of nature acting through spiritual agency according to the immutable will of the Omnipotent Ruler, and the phases of the formation of your planet in its latent state, and of the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms; their appearance, development, and progress, the phases of physical purification and transforma-

Digitized by Google

tion of your planet, and the physical, moral, and intellectual purification and transformation of your humanity.

The branches of the tree on which the birds rest signify the degree of development to which your planet must attain to become a dwelling-place of peace and happiness to which purified spirits will come to advance with it on a new and ascending path towards the progress which they must make to arrive at perfection, with the help and assistance of the spirits of the Lord, under the direction and guidance of the Master.

By the parable in which Jesus compared the kingdom of the heavens, or the kingdom of God, to leaven hidden in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened, he designed to make men comprehend the secret, but continued, action of the seed which he sowed in their hearts. Centuries have developed it; but for the most part it has scarcely risen above the ground. How far you still are from the period when this seed shall become a tree, like the mustard-seed, and its leafy branches shall shelter the faithful!

Jesus only spoke of *three* measures of meal to accommodate his language to the customs of the age; for this was the quantity of meal that it was usual to leaven at one time. From a spiritual point of view, the kingdom of God, as compared with the leaven in the parable, typifies the regenerative influence which Jesus cast into the hearts of men by his moral doctrine, words, acts, teaching and example. This it is which by its secret and continuous action in the past, which we shall hasten in the present and in the future by the New Revelation, leads the spirit to the elevation and purity which enable it to rejoice in divine felicity, wherever it may be. The leavening of the whole is the attainment of the object, when this elevation and purity have been acquired. You have all this leaven in your hearts, which the Lord has placed there, and we are waiting till the fermentation (which we urge on so far as we are permitted) shall have leavened the meal to the needful extent. We tell you like Jesus that our words will not pass

Digitized by Google

away, but your human generations will succeed each other many times before the leaven shall have leavened all the meal.

Progress must pursue the regular course which it has followed until this age, resembling, though in inverse proportions, the ball which rolls down a mountain. We say inversely, because the ball rolls down the mountain, whereas progress ascends at first by slow and painful steps; but little by little the first difficulties are surmounted; it finds a passage more easily, and at length finds the path carved in the rock, which will lead it to the summit. Then it acquires its full impulse, and bounding like an ibex pursued by hunters, it leaps forward, springs over every obstacle, and at length reaches the blessed haven which it longed to attain. The beginning of the course of the ball which descends the mountain, as a figure of the progress which ascends it, is first slow, and then grows more rapid little by little, and when it has nearly arrived at the middle of the course which it has to traverse, its speed increases in proportion to the impulse which it has received. It will soon bound forwards towards the goal; but we tell you again that it has scarcely reached the middle of its course at present.

Do not be too ready to believe in the speedy regeneration of your planet. Work zealously at the moral and intellectual improvement of men; and when the moral work shall advance (and you are scarcely at the beginning, not of the work, but even of the idea) you will then perceive the physical nature of your planet change its aspect; but before reconstructing the habitation on a new plan, it is needful that the inhabitants should be prepared to enter it. Everything in the divine work is linked together; matter is conformed to matter; but when your moral progress has been sufficient to fit you to live a spiritual rather than an animal life, you will see the appearance of your planet gradually change; its material constitution will be purified in the same proportion; and when the necessities of humanity change their nature, the products of the soil will

Digitized by Google

likewise change their character. Matter was not created for the spirit, but for the body; and the less dominion the flesh exerts over you, the less will become your material necessities; and consequently the more will your planet be modified to assimilate it to the changes of your nature. Your planet and your humanity are destined to purify themselves, and to advance without ceasing towards fluidic conditions; for this is the universal goal.

(Mark iv. 26–29.)—By this parable Jesus showed the multitude that the spirit of man must, like seed cast into the earth, pass through the stages of germination, growth, transformation, development and fructification, and arrive at moral and intellectual maturity before it can be handed over at harvest time to the care of the reapers who are commissioned to gather it for the kingdom of God.

Jesus said to the multitude, speaking of the seed cast into the ground, "the seed should grow and increase he knows not how," because at the age when he addressed them, men, and especially those to whom he spoke, troubled themselves little to search into the source of things, or to endeavour to understand them, and to follow their course. You must remember that, of all the ancient nations, the Hebrew nation was one of the most ignorant, and accepted, with repugnance, the progress which had been made, and was forced upon it, but was so proud of race that it never sought to make any of its own accord.

Until your own times, the seed has sprouted and increased without man knowing how. Progress has been made without his perceiving its secret springs, in the occult influence of the spirits of the Lord, seconded by that of the missionary spirits on your earth.

But for his apathy man would long since have been able to notice the workings of the divine seed; but those who received the seed were proud and vain like the Hebrews, and permitted it to grow without trying to study its phenomena. The New Revelation will teach you the manner of your progress by the light which Spiritism throws on the influences around you, and it likewise enables you to study

Digitized by Google

and understand the phenomena of the germination and growth of the divine seed.

But whether man is born or dies, and whether he sleeps or wakes, progress pursues its course, and in time, by expiation and reincarnation the guilty and rebellious will make progress, and the spiritual light will shine over all your earth, and enlighten the steps of all men. Woe to those who wilfully remain blind! for they too must progress, but for this they must suffer those long and painful expiations on the inferior planets which have become necessary for their moral improvement and progress.

From a spiritual point of view, the parable of the seed cast into the ground is the emblem of the ages that man has traversed in the path of progress since his first appearance on your globe, and of the ages which he must still traverse before his regeneration, for the searching eyes of the Master penetrated both the past and the future. The blade which the earth has produced in consequence of the germination and growth of the seed denotes the time which preceded the appearance of Jesus on your earth; the formation of the ear denotes the period which followed the appearance of the Master until your own age; and the formation of the full corn in the ear, when it has arrived at maturity, and the sickle is brought, denotes the present and future era of Spiritism, which comes to prepare and to accomplish the regeneration of humanity by the New Revelation, and to fulfil the promises which Jesus made to men in his prophetic words.

Since the appearance of man upon your planet, the spirits of the Lord, by their occult influence in the errant state, and those, always superior to the masses, who were successively sent on missions, have aided in the progress of successive generations of men, according to the immutable will of God, and under the direction of the Master. They have laboured at the development of progress, and the germination and growth of the seed, which produced first the blade, and then the ear. They will now, according to the results already obtained and the degree of fertility and

Digitized by Google

warmth of the soil, labour at the formation of the corn, and at maturing the grain which is already formed, that it may be ready for the sickle when the time of harvest has come. As regards the grain which has already ripened since the diffusion of the New Revelation, they have already begun to use the sickle, because the time of harvest has come.

At the present day, the corn is formed, and the grain is ripening, and it is ripe already in a few chosen places. Thus the sickle has been used already. Try to understand our words. Spiritism has not existed many hours; but has not the grain been formed already in many places? Moreover, have not the beneficent rays of the sun of truth begun to bring many hearts to maturity, and have not its vivifying rays ripened some ears in a few chosen spots, which we have gathered with care? The entire harvest is not ripe; far from that; but partial reapings can be made, and in the vast field which the Lord has entrusted to us, the most fertile and warmest soils are best suited to mature it.

The sun of truth gilds the ears which form, and the grains swell. Expose those ears on which we reckon to its rays, and let them ripen till the moment when the harvest is ready. Let them be penetrated by the fecundating fires shed upon them by the Lord; and every ripened ear will be committed to the hands of the reapers. When the sheaves of chosen ears have been formed, we shall cast these fruitful seeds over your earth; and then, animated by divine love, these seeds will yield abundant harvests, and will make the most barren soil productive; only prepare the ears which must furnish the seed. The allegory is obvious, and easily understood; these fruitful seeds are the purified spirits who will be sent on a mission to your earth to aid their incarnate brethren to advance morally and intellectually, and to fulfil their experiences in the path traced out by Jesus, and enlightened by the New Revelation. Go, children, purify and raise yourselves, and always bow your heads the lower before the divine Majesty the higher your hearts are raised towards him.

Yes, as Jesus said, when the corn has arrived at maturity,

Digitized by Google

the sickle is brought because the time of harvest has come. When you are ripe, we shall assemble you amongst us to give you your instructions under the direction of the Master, and according to the will of the Lord. You will go to aid in the maturity of the grain, and when the sickle is brought, and the harvest is finished, we shall prepare the seed for the following season, and thus the purification and renovation of the human race will be accomplished.

(Matth. xiii. 34, 35.)—What Jesus revealed to men, under the mystery and in the darkness of parable, concerning the life eternal, had not yet been spoken. The Hebrews had a vague idea of the immortality of the soul, and Christ came to give his disciples, as well as the rebellious Jews, a definite idea of that which was previously a shadow.

(Mark iv. 34, 35.)—Jesus explained to his disciples the sense in which they were to understand his words, but while he let them perceive their prophetic character, he only gave them what they were able to receive in the incarnate state, and what they needed for the accomplishment of their mission under the empire of the letter, veiling from them everything which required to remain secret, until men had become capable of receiving the New Revelation gradually, in proportion as they were able to bear it.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 36–43.

Explanation of the Parable of the Darnel.

(36) Then Jesus having sent away the crowds, went into the house, and his disciples came to him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the darnel in the field. (37) And he answered and said unto them, The sower of the good seed is the Son of Man. (38) The field is the world: the good seed represents the children of the kingdom, and the darnel represents the children of the wicked one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. (39) And the harvest is the consummation of the era ; and the reapers are angels. (40) As therefore the darnel was collected, and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the consummation of this age. (41) The Son of Man shall send his angels, and shall gather out of his kingdom all them that offend, and those who work lawlessness. (42) And shall cast them into the furnace of fire ; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth (43) Then the just shall shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Digitized by Google

§ 167. The last words of Jesus show that the language used in the explanation of the parable was itself still veiled. They imply that it was necessary to free the spirit from the letter to arrive at the exact meaning of the terms employed to explain the parable, and the thoughts concealed under them, and to seek for the Spirit which quickeneth instead of the letter which killeth. They warned men to take care what meaning they attached to the explanation which was given them.

Men have understood and interpreted the words of Jesus literally, according to the prejudices and traditions of the age. They have falsified the interpretation of the words by materializing them, and have therefore falsified the sense also. The New Revelation which we bring you explains the full meaning of the Master in spirit and in truth.

(V. 37.)—Jesus, who is charged with the progress of your planet and its humanity (that is, the spirits who come to incarnate themselves upon it), has been sowing good seed ever since the appearance of man upon your earth, and has laboured and will labour at your progress, and will direct it by the spirits who aid him in his mission, until the spirits incarnated on your planet have attained the perfection required to raise them to the rank of pure spirits in the spiritual hierarchy.

He came to sow the good seed by his earthly mission, when he came to trace out the path of progress by his words, actions, teaching, and example; and to lay the foundations of human regeneration.

Jesus uses the expression "the Son of Man" in speaking of himself, to remind men of his apparently human earthly mission; and at the same time he demonstrates his power and sovereignty by the veiled explanation of the parable, appropriating his language to the intelligence and requirements of the age, and while serving the present by the letter, regarding the future by the spirit. He thus shows his power and sovereignty as sent by God, and as having been appointed by him the King of this planet, which he calls his "kingdom;" as having "the angels"

Digitized by Google

under his authority, and as possessing all power over your earth, which is his "kingdom," and over the successive generations of men who inhabit it. Before the "consummation of the age" he orders "his angels" to gather together the children of iniquity who are represented by the darnel, and to remove them out of his kingdom, the world, and cast them into "the furnace of fire," where there shall be "wailing and gnashing of teeth," whereas the children of the kingdom, who are represented by the good corn, and who have become just, shall remain in his kingdom, and shine there like the sun.

(V. 38.)—The world represented by the field is your planet and its humanity; the children of the kingdom represented by the good seed are those who strive after progress, and endeavour to attain it; and the children of iniquity represented by the darnel are those who abandon themselves to evil influences because their own instincts are evil.

(V. 39.)—The devil who sowed the darnel, and will yet continue to do so on your earth, and who is the "enemy," means all the evil spirits of error and deceit, impure, thoughtless, and perverse spirits, whether errant or incarnate, who endeavour to exert their evil influence on man to impede his progress by causing him to avoid the good, and to practise evil in thought, word, and deed; and thus to lead him away from the paths of the Lord which are fully traced out in the words of Jesus, when properly understood, and practised in their full principles and consequences, both from a material, moral, and intellectual point of view, in social, family, and private life; for his words include all the law and the prophets, and they run, "Love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourself; and always act in all things towards others as you would that they should act towards you."

"The consummation of the age" which is predicted, and which corresponds to the harvest, is not what human interpretations have represented. It has been represented as sudden, to human eyes, and has been misunderstood by

Digitized by Google

those who imagined that the whole universe would be transformed and renovated in an instant of time.

The end of the world has long been preparing, and is gradually being accomplished. You are advancing towards the period when the inferior spirits who incarnate themselves on your earth will be driven away by the mere influence of your presence, and will fly to surroundings which are better suited to them. You know that the inferior spirits dread the presence of elevated ones. Would not a vile and debauched man feel out of place and ill at ease among a company composed of the wisest and most virtuous men, and would he not return as soon as possible to those who were like himself? It will be thus with the inferior spirits, when the end of *your* world has come, in the sense that your own natures have become elevated and changed. As you ascend in the spiritual hierarchy, everything will change around you; and when this takes place, the darnel will have been cast into the fire of purification, and the good corn will shine in the eyes of the Great Father.

At this period, when your progress will be sufficiently advanced to drive away the inferior spirits who surround you, you will enter into the spiritual state, in the sense that the matter, both of man and of the planet, will become purified, though without entering upon the purely fluidic state. Remember all the phases and degrees which separate spirits incarnated in a more or less material, or more or less fluidic manner on the various worlds in which they dwell. When you have arrived at the first spiritual phase, you will enter on your first separation from gross matter, among a class of spirits whose slight envelope differs entirely from yours, but is nevertheless not wholly fluidic. There is still a robe over the perisprit, as you understand it; and you will yet have to change this robe many times before you are fitted to inhabit the fluidic worlds. You must not suppose that when you have attained to this degree of advancement, you will be confined to the earth on which you dwell. It will likewise have followed its progressive course; but

Digitized by Google

you will then be at liberty to dwell on other worlds of equal elevation, without being restricted to one rather than another.

The consummation of the age, as typified by the harvest, is presented to you under three distinct periods. The first is that during which the inferior spirits are permitted to incarnate themselves on your earth, to purify themselves by expiations and reincarnations, and thus to become transformed from "children of iniquity" into "children of the kingdom."

The second period is that of the commencement of the separation of the darnel from the good corn, during which the guilty spirits who have remained wilfully blind and rebellious, will be removed from your planet, and relegated to the inferior planets.

The third period is that when the removal of these inferior spirits shall have effected the complete separation of the darnel from the good corn. Your earth will then become for the future a dwelling-place of peace and happiness for the good spirits who are prepared to enter on the spiritual phase which we have just explained to you, and to advance in the path of progress in knowledge, charity, and love, under the influence of the spirits of the Lord, and of those incarnated on a mission.

The reapers are all the spirits of the Lord, whomsoever they are, whether incarnated on a mission, or not, who labour at the progress, purification and regeneration of your humanity. It is obvious that those who labour at this work, are sent to the harvest.

(Verses 40–42.)—The kingdom of the Son of Man is your earth and its humanity, when they shall have reached the point of purity and progress when the guilty and inferior spirits, who have remained wilfully blind and rebellious, shall be removed and relegated to the inferior planets. The angels who will gather together and cast out of the kingdom all those who give offence and commit injustice, will be the pure and superior spirits, and not those incarnated on missions; for the separation and classification

Digitized by Google

of the spirits who have remained rebellious will be effected in the errant state. You must not forget that all the spirits who are working on your earth upon the regeneration of humanity, and are clothed with flesh like yourselves, are more or less fallible; and are therefore on this account alone disqualified from passing judgment on a brother incarnate like themselves. They have no right to say to him, "Thou art guilty, and I am thy judge," or "Thou hast fallen, and I condemn or absolve thee." However purified a spirit clothed in a corporeal human envelope may be, he suffers the influence of that envelope to a greater or less extent; and being therefore himself more or less fallible, he is forbidden to judge others. They are the pure and superior spirits free from all human contact, who will come to separate the good corn from the darnel. Therefore do you, labourers who likewise work in the field of the Lord, content yourselves with aiding the ripening of the corn with all your power. Expose it, as far as you possibly can, to the beneficent rays of the truth; but do not judge your brethren. Never judge; for you are far from being able to comprehend the secret views of the Lord, being blinded by your veil of flesh.

At the consummation of the age, when the gradual purification of your planet will be effected by the separation of the darnel from the good corn, the darnel will still be burned as in the past, but it will no longer be permitted to grow by the side of the good corn. The "children of iniquity" will still be subjected to expiation as in the past; but they will no longer be permitted to incarnate themselves on your earth. The angels sent by Christ will remove them from your planet, and will relegate them to the inferior worlds, where they will class them according to their tendencies and guilt. Some will be sent to worlds inferior to the rank which yours will then occupy, and many others to worlds equal to your world at its present stage.*

There, in these inferior worlds, a long and painful expiation will burn up the evil plant, the darnel; but the spirit is

* These words were medianimically dictated in February, 1863.

Digitized by Google

not like the darnel, which the fire reduces to ashes. It will be purified by this regenerative action, and it bears the germ of the good corn in itself. The consumed darnel gives birth to the fruitful seed, and harvests of good corn will spring from its ashes. The darnel will still be burned as often as necessary to change it into good corn, that the "children of iniquity" may become the "children of the kingdom," and thus, in their turn, the "just."

We again desire to impress upon you that wherever such expressions are used as "furnace of fire; Gehenna; fire of Gehenna; wailing, and gnashing of teeth," they invariably signify the expiation of the spirit, which is following by reincarnation and new experiences, and are always used in an emblematical sense.

(V. 43.)—These words are figurative. The light with which the children of the Lord shine is truth, faith and love. The just are the children of the Lord; the purified spirits, whose perisprit, moreover, has become more luminous from the effects of this purification, and radiates a light of purity and brightness corresponding to the degree of elevation which they have acquired. The kingdom of their Father denotes the superior worlds in space; and your planet will form a portion of it when it has attained the requisite degree of elevation; and will then become, to employ a human comparison, a province of the kingdom of God.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSE 44.

The Hidden Treasure.

(44) Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in the field; which a man finding hideth, and from joy thereat goes away and selleth everything whatsoever that he hath, and buyeth that field.

§ 168. He who receives the word of God should experience the same delight (if one may compare such different feelings) as he who finds a treasure. He should cherish this source of eternal riches in his heart, and use every effort to prevent any of the vices of humanity from robbing him of it. He should cast aside his errors, his evil instincts and desires, and his vices; and in short everything which

Digitized by Google

sinks him to matter, as earthly wealth binds men to the soil to which they are attached; and should make every sacrifice which humanity requires to preserve this spiritual treasure.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 45, 46.

The Pearl of Great Price.

(45) Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a merchant man, seeking fine pearls. (46) Who finding a costly pearl, goes away and barters everything whatsoever that he hath, and buyeth it.

§ 169. This parable has nearly the same signification as the last. It represents the man who seeks after truth sincerely, and when he has found it, accepts it, and rids himself without hesitation of his evil propensities and material appetites, which previously formed his false riches, and uses every effort to preserve the pearl of great price, which, like the treasure, is the truth which he found when he received the word of God.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 47–52.

The Parable of the Fishing Net.

(47) Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a drag-net cast into the sea, and it gathered up of all kinds. (48) When it was full, it was drawn up on the beach, and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, and threw the worthless away. (49) So shall it be in the end of the age; the angels shall bring out and separate the wicked from among the just. (50) And shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (51) Jesus says to them, Did you understand all these things? They say to him, Yea, Lord. (52) And he said to them, Therefore every Scribe who is instructed in the kingdom of the heavens, is like a man who is an householder, and brings forth from his treasure things new and old.

§ 170. We need not explain the parable of the net. You will readily understand that it refers to the separation of the good from the bad, and is to be explained in precisely the same way as the parable of the darnel. You may notice that many parables have the same signification. They were spoken at different times and addressed to different men, but the object was the same.

Jesus asked his disciples if they had understood all these things, and they answered "Yes." They understood the

Digitized by Google

parable of the net, as far as it was given them to do so; that is, as an image of the selection which would be gradually effected among spirits, that there might at length be no more rebellious spirits left to be removed.

(V. 52.)—Jesus means here by the word Scribe any man who is more enlightened than the masses, and is called upon to shed the light of his learning and intelligence among them. You know that the Scribes were the wise and learned men of that period. They diffused, or rather they ought to have diffused, light around them, but they more frequently hid their light under a bushel. He who brings forth from his treasure things new and old is he who avails himself of the knowledge which he has previously acquired to confirm and recommend what he desires to establish.

Thus you, Spiritists, ought, within the limits of your instruction and faculties, to turn over old chronicles, investigate libraries, and seek to discover old manuscripts which have been lost sight of in the secular libraries or the greedy convents which possess them; and, strengthened by the old documents which you yourselves possess, establish the authenticity and antiquity of your science in the eyes of the timid, the incredulous, and the half-instructed.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 53–58. MARK, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 1-6.

A Prophet is not without Honour save in his own Country.

Matth. xiii. (53) And when Jesus had ended these parables, he departed thence. (54) And coming into his native country, he taught them in their synagogues, so that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man his wisdom and his mighty works? (55) Is not this the carpenter's son; is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James and Joses and Simon and Judas? (56) And his sisters, are they not all with us? whence therefore hath this man all these things? (57) And they were offended at him. But Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honour, except in his native country, and in his own house. (58) And he did not perform many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

Mark vi. (1) And he departed thence, and came into his native country, and his disciples followed him. (2) And npon the Sabbath, he began to preach in the synagogue, and many who heard were

Digitized by Google

amazed, and said, Whence hath this man these things? and what manner of power is given to him that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? (3) Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. (4) And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honour, except in his native country, and among his relations, and in his own house. (5) And he was unable to perform any miracle there, except that he laid his hands upon a few sick persons, and healed them. (6) And he wondered at their unbelief, and he went round the villages, teaching in the assembling-place.

§ 171. (Matth. xiii. 57; Mark vi. 4.)—Jesus desired to remind his hearers of the prophetic character and mission ascribed to him by others. They regarded him as one of themselves, and as limited to the same human powers and faculties; but they were, nevertheless, profoundly amazed at the wisdom contained in his doctrine, his sayings, and his teachings; and at the actions which he performed, which appeared to them to be miraculous. From the spiritual point of view, these words are a thoroughly philosophical reflection; and you have often had opportunities of verifying their accuracy.

(Matth. xiii. 58.)—Are you not aware that the opposition of spirits, whether incarnate or not, impedes the influence which you might otherwise exert? If Jesus had wished, he could have overcome this opposing influence; but to what purpose? To compel conviction in the wilfully blind, who would have persisted in closing their eyes, and would thus have deserved a severer punishment. The gentle Jesus never desired to drive a spirit to rebel, but to save him from the sufferings caused by evil-doing.

(Mark vi. 5.)—Jesus could perform no miracles simply because he would not exert his authority over the rebellious spirits. It was not the power, but the will which was wanting; though it appeared otherwise to men. Does it not often happen that you abstain from some action because there is an impediment in the way which you do not wish to overcome?

The versions of Mark and Matthew correspond, both expressing the same idea in approximate terms. Mark adds (v. 6) that Jesus was astonished at their unbelief.

Digitized by Google

This is a human idea, expressing the opinion of men who regarded the Master as only a man like themselves. Jesus could not be surprised at their unbelief when he read the thoughts of all, and beheld the instincts and tendencies of the multitude, and the spirits who were attracted by their evil instincts and tendencies, and acted on them by their free will.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 1–12. MARK, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 14–29. LUKE, CHAP. III. VERSES 19, 20; IX.—7–9.

Death of John the Baptist.—Hebrew Belief in Reincarnation.

Matth. xiv. (1) At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report of Jesus, and said to his servants, (2) This is John the Baptist, who has risen from the dead, and therefore miracles are wrought by him. (3) For Herod had seized John, bound him, and cast him into prison, on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. (4) For John said to him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. (5) And when he desired to kill him, he feared the multitude, because they considered him to be a prophet. (6) But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and pleased Herod. (7) Wherefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she should ask. (8) And she said, having been prompted by her mother, Give me here the head of John the Baptist on a dish. (9) And the king was grieved; yet on account of his oaths, and of those reclining with him at table, he ordered it to be given her. (10) And he sent and beheaded John in the prison. (11) And his head was brought on a dish, and given to the little girl, and she took it to her mother. (12) And his disciples came and took up the body and buried it, and came and told Jesus.

Mark vi. (14) And king Herod heard of him, for his name was famous, and he said, John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and therefore miracles are wrought by him. (15) Others said, He is Elijah; and others said, He is a prophet, or like one of the prophets. (16) But when Herod heard it, he said, This is John whom I have beheaded; he is risen from the dead. (17) For Herod himself had sent and arrested John, and bound him in prison, on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, for he had married her. (18) For John said to Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. (19) And Herodias was angry with him, and wished to kill him, but she could not. (20) For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and pious man, and guarded him, and when he heard him, he did many things, and listened to him gladly. (21) And when it was a convenient day, when Herod made a dinner for his great men, captains, and the chief men of Galilee, (22) And the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod, and those who were sitting with him, and the king said to the little girl, (23) Ask of me whatever thou wilt, unto the half of my kingdom. (24) And she went out, and said to her mother, What shall

Digitized by Google

I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. (25) And going in directly with haste to the king, she asked, saying, I wish you to give me immediately the head of John the Baptist on a dish. (26) And the king was much grieved, but on account of the oaths and the company, would not refuse her. (27) And the king immediately sent a guardsman, and commanded his head to be brought. (28) And he went out and beheaded John in prison, and brought the head on a dish, and gave it to the little girl, and the little girl gave it to her mother. (29) And when his disciples heard it, they came and took up his body, and laid it in the tomb.

Luke iii. (19) And Herod the tetrarch being reproved by him on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and the many crimes which he had committed, (20) Herod added this above all the rest, and shut up John in prison.

Luke ix. (7) And Herod the tetrarch heard of all that happened with him, and he was perplexed, for some said, John has risen from the dead; (8) Some said, Elijah has appeared, and others, A prophet of the ancients has risen again. (9) And Herod said, I have beheaded John, but who is this of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.

§ 172. The rumours concerning Jesus, and Herod's remarks, confirm the existence of the popular belief in reincarnation among the Hebrews. Men could only suppose Jesus to be Elijah, John the Baptist, or one of the old prophets, by the reincarnation of the soul or spirit in a new body, as the son of Joseph and Mary, who were regarded as his father and mother. Do not wonder at the different expressions used by Herod. He heard of Jesus more than once, and the words recorded by Luke were spoken first. Those recorded by Matthew and Mark were spoken at a later time, and under different circumstances.

Concerning the death of John the Baptist, we need only remark that the narratives of Matthew and Mark explain and complete each other. The daughter of Herodias did not know beforehand the effect which her dancing would produce on the king, and the offer which he would make her. It was only afterwards that she went out to consult her mother, and then returned to Herod, with her demand for the head of John the Baptist.

We have only given this explanation to prevent your troubling yourselves about any apparent contradiction between the two records; but you should never stop at such unimportant details. What does it matter to the faith which you profess whether Herodias asked for the head of John the Baptist before or after the dance, or the king's offer?

Digitized by Google

Herodias and her daughter had both selected a formidable temptation, and the circumstances under which it was to be accomplished. The task was beyond their strength, and they sank under it in consequence. Do you not understand that the Lord knows beforehand who will fail? His wisdom foresees the weakness of the spirit, and the snares into which its weakness may lead it in the exercise of its free will. If one of your children persists in asking you to let him attempt a task beyond his strength, do you not foresee that his strength and perseverance will be insufficient? If you consent to his making the effort, is it not simply to teach him to estimate his own abilities more correctly?

As Herodias and her daughter failed in these temptations, it was needful for them to seek means of purification and progress by expiation and fresh experiences.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 13–22. MARK, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 30–45. LUKE, CHAP. IX. VERSES 10–17.

Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes.

Matth. xiv. (13) And when Jesus heard it, he departed thence in a boat into a desert place privately, and the multitudes having heard it, followed him from the cities on foot. (14) And Jesus coming out saw a large crowd, and had compassion on them, and healed their sick. (15) And when it grew late his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is already past; send away the multitudes, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves. (16) And Jesus said to them, They have no occasion to go away, do you give them to eat. (17) And they said to him, We have nothing here but five loaves and two fishes. (18) And he said, Bring them here to me. (19) And having ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and two fishes, he looked up to heaven and gave thanks, and having broken the loaves he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples to the crowds. (20) And they all ate and were satisfied, and they took up the remainder of the fragments, twelve basketsful. (21) And they who had eaten were about 5,000 men, besides women and children. (22) And Jesus immediately constrained his disciples to embark in the boat, and to go before him to the other side, until he should send away the crowds.

Mark vi. (30) And the Apostles came to Jesus and related to him all things which they had done and taught. (31) And he said to them, Come ye yourselves privately unto a desert place and rest a little; for there were many coming and going, and they had no opportunity to eat. (32) And they went away privately in the boat into a desert place.

Digitized by Google

(33) And the crowds saw them departing, and many knew him, and they ran together on foot from all the cities, and went before them and met him. (34) And Jesus saw a large crowd, and had compassion on them, for they were like sheep having no shepherd, and he began to teach them many things. (35) And when much time had already past, his disciples came to him, and said, This is a desert place, and it is already late, (36) Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding fields and villages, for they have nothing to eat. (37) And he answered and said to them, Do you give them to eat. And they say to him, Shall we go away and buy bread for two hundred denarii, and give them to eat? (38) And he says to them, How many loaves have you? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. (39) And he ordered them all to sit down in companies on the green grass. (40) And they lay down in companies, by hundreds and by fifties. (41) And taking the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven and gave thanks, and he broke the loaves, and gave to his disciples to set before them, and he divided the two fishes among all. (42) And they all ate and were satisfied. (43) And they took up twelve basketsful of the fragments, and of the fishes. (44) And they who ate the loaves were about 5,000 men. (45) And immediately he constrained his disciples to embark in the boat and to go before him to Bethsaida on the other side, while he should send away the crowd.

Luke ix. (10) And the Apostles having returned, related to him what great things they had performed, and taking them with him, he withdrew privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. (11) And when the crowds knew it they followed him, and having received them, he spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing. (12) And the day began to decline, and the twelve came and said to him, Send away the crowd, that they may go and disperse themselves in the surrounding fields and villages, and find provisions, for we are here in a desert place. (13) And he saith to them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have nothing with us but five loaves and two fishes, unless we should go and buy food for all this people. (14) For they were about 5,000 men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down in companies of fifty each. (15) And they did so, and made them all sit down. (16) And taking the five loaves and two fishes, he looked up to heaven, gave thanks, and broke them and gave to his disciples to distribute to the crowd. (17) And they ate and were all satisfied, and they took up twelve basketsful of fragments that remained.

§ 173. We have already spoken of the power which Jesus possessed of attracting to himself the fluids which he needed. By exerting his powerful will over the spirits who were eager to obey him, he could have multiplied the small quantity of food which his disciples possessed to any extent. This food having been prepared by appropriate accessory fluids which gave them the nutritive properties required, answered the needs of matter, and a very small quantity satisfied the most craving appetite.

Would it not have been enough for Christ to will that the

Digitized by Google

multitude should be satisfied? It would only have been necessary for him to have gathered round them the needful fluids, which would have satisfied their hunger when breathed. But material eyes required a physical effect, and this multiplication was more striking than if the same result had been attained by invisible means. It seemed to the Apostles, the disciples, and the multitude, that all were fed with the five loaves and two fishes which Jesus took, and that the fragments which he broke in his hands multiplied themselves infinitely. He gave these to the disciples, who took them and distributed them to the people; and after all had eaten, twelve basketsful of fragments remained. This was what all had seen with their own eyes, and could bear witness to, for they had all partaken of the fragments of the five loaves and two fishes. The Apostles and disciples, as well as the multitude, were all alike ignorant of the hidden causes of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. This incomprehensible event was called a miracle, and is still regarded as such by those who are ignorant of the New Revelation, which initiates you into the secrets of the other world.

Some simple-hearted and humble-minded men have believed it to be a real fact (though without understanding it) on the faith of the Gospel narrative, based on the testimony of the eye-witnesses; but the majority have either pretended to believe it because they did not dare to deny it, or have openly denied or rejected it, because they could not comprehend it, and knew not how to explain it. Do you see anything of what is always passing around you in the spiritual world? As the Evangelists were just as ignorant as others of the causes of the event, they confined themselves under medianimic influence to relating the fact itself. The narrative implies that Jesus gave the fragments to his disciples, who put them into baskets to carry them, and to distribute them to the people. There were some women in the crowd who were provided with those baskets, which they carry on their heads in the East, and which serve equally well to carry fruits and vegetables, and to protect them from the heat

Digitized by Google

of the sun. When the multiplication of the loaves and fishes began, Jesus ordered the disciples to collect the baskets and bring them to him. The multiplication was accomplished in the following manner:—Jesus availed himself of the fluids he attracted to multiply the food in his hands, by rendering these fluids visible and tangible, with the appearance, form, smell, and taste of pieces of loaves and fishes. Otherwise the five loaves and two fishes would never have provided enough fragments, however small, to be divided among so large a company. When the disciples laid the fluidic products in the baskets, in the shape of loaves and fishes, these fragments were immediately surrounded by substances made by the spirits, and then rendered visible and tangible. The spirits prepared these substances in the same manner as those which Jesus gave to his disciples, and laid them, still invisible, in the empty baskets. They rendered them visible and tangible when the disciples put in the fragments which they had received from Jesus. The multiplication was thus effected in such a manner that the fragments which Jesus broke appeared to human eyes to multiply themselves in the act; and after leaving his hands, to multiply indefinitely in the baskets.

If Jesus had desired, he could have produced the result alone, but the means employed were more convenient. Was it not easier for the spirits around Jesus to lay the provisions which they had prepared invisibly, in the empty baskets, and to make them visible as soon as the disciples had put in the products that they received from Jesus, than for him to pass the whole contents of the baskets from his hands into those of the disciples? As these fluidic products were shaped like pieces of bread and fish, they were eaten as such. There is nothing surprising in this. Have you not seen a mesmeric somnambulist take the water or the wine which was given him for something totally different? Are you not aware of the great power of spiritual influence on man; and do you not understand how great must have been that which Jesus and the innumerable company of spirits around him could exercise over these men?

Digitized by Google

You are not told what became of the twelve baskets, or whether the fragments which were left over were preserved. All that it is important to know is, that the work which Jesus accomplished really took place; the details are of no consequence. You can understand that there was some confusion among so large a crowd, and when the Apostles went to the boat by the directions of Jesus, they put down the baskets which they had been using, and left them behind. They thought more of their spiritual necessities than of their bodily needs, which were satisfied for the moment, and they did not trouble about the rest. The secret influence acting upon them was enough to direct their attention to points that might interest them, when it was necessary to divert them to another object; and when Jesus ordered them to cross over before him, he prepared for a new act which he desired to accomplish. As the crowd retired in some disorder, the baskets in their way were picked up empty by some, and trampled upon by others who thought neither of the baskets nor of their contents. The fluidic products then lost their tangibility by spirit action, returned to their source, and everything went on as usual.

Everything was foreseen and provided for in the accomplishment of the works of the Master. As regards the Gospel narrative, take notice that it reproduces the impressions and explanations of men, in this instance, as in all others, under medianimic influence; and observe also that Jesus designed to make a strong impression upon his disciples and the multitude, so that although they believed his humanity to be the same as their own, they were profoundly impressed by his words and actions.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 23–33. MARK, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 46–52.

Jesus and Peter walking on the Lake.

Matth. xiv. (23) And having sent away the multitudes, he went up into the mountain privately to pray, and when it was evening he was

Digitized by Google

there alone. (24) And the boat was already in the middle of the lake, tossed about by the waves; for the wind was contrary. (25) And in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came to them walking on the lake. (26) And the disciples seeing him walking on the lake, were frightened, and said, It is a phantom; and they cried out with fear. (27) And immediately Jesus called to them, saying, It is I, be not afraid. (28) And Peter answered and said to him, Lord, if it be thou, command me to come to thee upon the water. (29) And he said, Come. And Peter, descending from the ship, walked on the water to come to Jesus. (30) But seeing the wind strong, he was frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord save me. (31) And immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and lifted him up, and says to him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? (32) And when they had entered the boat the wind abated. (33) And those in the boat came and did homage to him, saying, Truly thou art Son of God.

Mark vi. (46) And having taken leave of them, he went up into the mountain to pray. (47) And when it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. (48) And he saw them distressed with rowing, for the wind was against them, and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh to them, walking upon the lake, and would have passed by them. (49) And when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought it was a phantom, and cried out. (50) For they all saw him, and were frightened. And immediately he talked with them, and saith to them, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. (51) And he went up to them in the boat, and the wind fell, and they were immeasurably astounded in themselves. (52) For they did not consider about the loaves, for their heart was hardened.

§ 174. You can understand how Jesus walked on the water. As the spirit can traverse the air, so could Jesus cause his tangible perisprit to lose its material properties at pleasure, and return to the spiritual conditions of our existence. At the time when Jesus came to his disciples walking on the lake, he had returned to the perispritic condition of apparitions, and his body, though apparently human, and always visible and tangible, was, when he took Peter's hand, of less specific gravity than the waves.

You are told that his disciples believed that they saw a phantom. When Jesus came towards them walking on the lake, they did not know if what they saw was really their Master, or only an apparition. Some have witnessed similar apparitions, for the invisible world has been in communication with humanity in all ages; and as men did not know the causes of these phenomena, they were regarded even at that age, either as freaks of the imagination, or as the work of evil spirits, or as a special favour granted by the Lord to one of his incarnate creatures. These apparitions gave rise to the multitudes of gods and goddesses worshipped

Digitized by Google

by the idolators whose credulity was imposed upon by ambition or cupidity.

There were seeing mediums among the Jews also, who sometimes asserted that they had seen the apparition of some friend or relation, or even some of their patriarchs or prophets, for you are aware that spirits can assume all forms. Hence Peter, who was a very highly developed clairvoyant, clairaudient and physical medium, was unable to recognize Jesus, and took him for a phantom. He saw that he presented the same unsubstantial appearance as the apparitions that he had seen already; and it was only when Jesus stretched out his hand to him that he understood that it was really himself, as he had never seen a tangible apparition before.

As Peter's faith led him to obey Jesus, he was, by the mental command of the Master, upheld by spirits appointed for the purpose, and afterwards released, in such a manner that he began to sink the moment his doubts returned. Jesus might have left the whole charge of upholding him to the attendant spirits; but he took him by the hand not only to convince him that it was he himself, but to teach him that he was upheld by his power; for it is obvious that unless Jesus had desired it, the spirits would not have given Peter their aid.

Peter was a powerful physical medium, and it was by means of the fluids connected with his organism that the attendant spirits sustained him, and that he was thus enabled to walk on the lake. His mediumship enabled him at a later period to free himself from the chains with which he was bound,* by the power of the attendant spirits, as we will explain to you at a fitting time. Even if Peter had not been a physical medium, he would have been upheld by the surrounding spirits, who would then have gathered around him the necessary fluids which the powerful will of the Master had attracted. When Jesus and Peter had entered the boat, the wind ceased in consequence of the mental command which Jesus gave to the spirits in charge of the

* Acts vi. 6, 7.

Digitized by Google

winds and waves. You may refer to the explanations which we have given (vol. i. § 118, pp. 274 and 275), relating to the tempest which arose on the lake, and was then calmed.

(Matth. xiv. 33.)—These events appeared so surprising to those who witnessed them, that they thought they could only proceed from the direct action of God himself. As Jesus was the intermediate agent concerned in them, the title of Son of God immediately occurred to his disciples. As they did not understand the general sense in which Jesus often used the words "My Father" in speaking of the Universal Creator, they immediately gave them a special sense, and regarded Jesus as a personification of the Divinity. They consequently worshipped him, and this gave rise to the deeply-rooted but erroneous idea that God wishing to save humanity, and to redeem it from its faults was himself offered to himself as a propitiatory sacrifice. But this error was useful for the present, and paved the way for the future explanations of the New Revelation. Man is always conceited about his personal importance, and considered himself of such consequence in the eyes of the Creator, that, in order to redeem his faults, it was necessary that God, who could as he imagined hurl all the globes scattered through space into complete chaos by a simple effort of his will, should effect his redemption by sacrificing himself to himself. For this purpose he stooped himself to the level of his unworthy creatures, so that the victim sacrificed should be sufficiently worthy of those who were to be redeemed. O pride of man, who always believes himself to be the king of Creation, when he is, as it were, only a miserable ephemeral insect, as unimportant comparatively as the gnat which sports in the sunbeam! But the New Revelation comes to raise the veil which hid light and truth from your eyes, to teach you "who is the Son," and to make you understand the aim and object of the earthly mission of Jesus, and to what extent he is the representative of the Father as respects your planet and its humanity, as being your Protector, and your Lord and Master.

Digitized by Google

You are told that the amazement of the disciples on seeing Jesus walk on the lake was much increased when the wind fell as soon as he entered the boat, for they did not consider the multiplication of the loaves because their hearts were hardened; which signifies because they did not try to understand. As their eyes were still veiled, it appeared to them that the loaves multiplied of themselves, without their being able to see how, and without their even trying to understand it. Do you not sometimes witness events which apparently transcend the usual laws of humanity, without understanding them, or even making the slightest attempt to do so?

When Jesus walked on the water and Peter attempted it, the event appeared most astonishing to the human understanding of the disciples, because they more easily realized the impossibility of any creature converting the moving surface of the lake into a substance capable of bearing the weight of a man; and, as everything combined to open their eyes, they realized the two events which they had witnessed during the day. They did not understand their causes; for it was reserved for the New Revelation to teach these to men. But they understood that they could only proceed from a power so far above that of men that only God could effect them, and they consequently regarded them as miracles produced by God himself. Their astonishment did not arise from their not having comprehended the material fact of the multiplication of the loaves, but because they would not have been surprised if they had understood that this was the work of God himself, as they did afterwards, and should have perceived at the time.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 34–36.
MARK, CHAP. VI.—VERSES 53–56.

Touching the Dress of Jesus.

Matth. xiv. (34) And having crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret, (35) And the men of that place having recognized him, sent into all the surrounding country, and brought to him all who were ill, (36) And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment; and as many as touched him were completely cured.

Digitized by Google

Mark vi. (53) And having crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret, and anchored there, (54) And when they came out of the boat, immediately they recognized him, (55) And running into all the surrounding country, they began to carry about those who were ill in their beds, when they heard that he was there. (56) And wherever he went into the villages, or towns, or fields, they laid the sick in the public places, and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment. And as many as touched him were healed.

§ 175. We have already explained the magnetic power which Jesus shed around him. The touching of his garments was called miraculous from ignorance of the real nature of the effects, but was a material agency required by man. The sick people were not cured by the mere fact of their touching the Master's garment, but by the effect of his powerful will, and by magnetic action, which directed the appropriate fluids throughout their diseased frames.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 1–20. MARK, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 1–23.

Unwashed Hands.—Real Impurity.

Matth. xv. (1) Then the Scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, (2) Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders, for they do not wash their hands when they eat bread? (3) And he answered and said to them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God through your tradition? (4) For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and thy mother, and he who reviles his father or mother, let him be put to death. (5) But you say, Whoever shall say to his father or his mother, Whatever you may profit by me is a gift; and then he will not honour his father or his mother. (6) And you have abrogated the commandment of God through your tradition. (7) Ye hypocrites! well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying, (8) This people draw near to me with their mouth, and honour me with their lips, but their heart keeps far from me. (9) And they revere me falsely, teaching doctrines which are the commandments of men. (10) Having called the multitude to him, he says to them, Hear and understand. (11) It is not that which cometh into the mouth which defileth a man, but that which cometh from the mouth, this defileth the man. (12) Then his disciples came and said to him, Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard the discourse? (13) And he answered and said, Every thing planted which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted out. (14) Let them alone; they are blind leaders of the blind: and if the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the pit. (15) And Peter answered and said to him, Explain this parable to us. (16) And Jesus said, Are you also still without understanding? (17) Do you not yet perceive that every thing which entereth into the mouth goes into the stomach, and is cast out into the draught? (18) But that which goeth out of the mouth cometh forth from the heart, and these things defile the man. (19) For out of the

Digitized by Google

heart proceed evil deliberations, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessings, and blasphemies. (20) These are the things which defile the man; but it does not defile the man to eat with unwashed hands.

Mark vii. (1) And the Pharisees and certain of the Scribes who came from Jerusalem gathered round him. (2) And seeing some of his disciples eating bread with dirty, that is, with unwashed, hands, they found fault. (3) For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands up to the elbow, obeying the tradition of the elders. (4) And they do not eat after market without bathing, and there are many other things which they make a point of obeying, such as washing drinking cups, and pint measures, and copper vessels, and couches. (5) Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him, Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders? (6) And he answered and said to them, Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their hearts hold far aloof from me. (7) And they honour me idly, teaching doctrines which are but the commandments of men. (8) For setting aside the law of God, you enforce the traditions of men concerning the washing of pint measures and drinking cups, and you do many other things of the same sort. (9) And he said to them, You wholly disregard the commandment of God that you may observe your traditions. (10) For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother, and whosoever reviles father or mother, let him be put to death. (11) But you say, If a man should say to his father or his mother, That which you might benefit by me is Korban (a gift). (12) And ye suffer him no longer to do anything for his father or mother. (13) Setting aside the Word of God by the tradition which ye have handed down, and you do many other like things. (14) And calling to him all the multitude, he said to them, Listen to me, all of you, and understand. (15) Nothing of that which is outside a man, and which enters into him, can defile him, but those things which proceed from him, these are those which defile the man. (16) He that hath ears to hear let him hear. (17) And when they left the multitude and went into the house, his disciples questioned him about the parable. (18) And he says to them, Are you also void of understanding? Do you not know that nothing that enters into a man from outside can defile him? (19) For it does not go into his heart, but into the stomach, and goeth out in the draught, cleansing all foods. (20) And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defiles the man. (21) For from within, from the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts; (22) Covetousness, knaveries, treachery, intemperance, the evil eye, blasphemy, arrogance, folly, (23) All those evil things come from within, and defile a man.

§ 176. We tell you, like Jesus, to despise traditions, for the words spoken by the Just One to the Pharisees are still applicable to your own times. Despise traditions, for they have corrupted the law of love and pardon, the forgetfulness of offences, and the mutual concord which Jesus preached to you. Tradition has corrupted his mild law, as it previously corrupted the law of Moses. Cast it aside, and return to the simple Christianity of Christ. Follow his

Digitized by Google

fraternal counsels, walk in the path which he has marked out for you, and allow the proud Pharisees of your own days to take offence. They speak and act towards Spiritists as the ancient Pharisees spoke and acted with regard to Jesus. Let them take offence, for they also will be compelled to abandon their traditions, and to return to the law which is the source of all virtues. Guard yourselves from everything which could defile you, and pronounce no word, nor commit any act which your conscience condemns ever so slightly. Do not give way to any evil thought, but march onwards with simplicity, dispensing good things from the good treasure of your heart, that this treasure may be shared among your brethren, and may cause abundance to spring up everywhere in virtue and peace in their hearts.

The Hebrews might set aside a certain portion of their goods for religious purposes by a vow, or as an offering; and by pretending that this portion was all that they could spare for their parents' benefit, they absolved themselves from aiding them. The gift thus made to the Lord was supposed to profit the father or mother in celestial blessings. It was thus that hypocrisy and impiety profaned the Divinity, and disgraced the unworthy priest who suffered and encouraged such a profanation. It was this example which Jesus selected to lead the Scribes and Pharisees to reflect on what they called the tradition of the elders, and to reject everything in the tradition which was contrary to the divine law, as it had been revealed by the Lord through Moses and the Prophets. He also wished to silence the Scribes and Pharisees before he addressed the multitude.

The traditions of the elders were customs added to the real laws. You may understand by customs all doctrines, ordinances, and precepts, proceeding from men and enacted by them. By real laws you may understand the divine laws revealed to the Hebrews, either by a spirit-manifestation to Moses on Mount Sinai,* or through his inspired or clair-

* For further explanations, compare the section on the Ten Commandments at the end of the book.

Digitized by Google

audient mediumship. You also, Christians, have your traditions of the elders in man-made doctrines, ordinances, and precepts, which have added to, and therefore changed, misrepresented, and falsified the divine law which was revealed by Jesus during his mission. The divine law is wholly and exclusively comprised in the words of the Master which were veiled by the letter when necessary, to form the basis of the New Revelation.

Just as Jesus came to destroy the tradition of the elders among the Hebrews, and thus to root out every plant which his Heavenly Father had not planted, even so, the New Revelation of your own days has come to destroy every tradition of the elders among you, through the spirits of the Lord who are his messengers. The words spoken by Jesus to the Scribes and Pharisees of that period are likewise applicable to those of your own days, who also keep up the tradition of the elders, and honour God with their lips, but honour him in vain, because they teach the doctrines and commandments of men. Can God recognize outward purity when the heart is impure? Can God accept the worship of the lips when the heart is cold? Can God bless and pardon man when he curses and revenges himself? O, men, honour God from the bottom of your hearts, and follow with simplicity the law of love which he imposes on you. Be not whitened sepulchres outwardly, but let purity reside in your heart, whatever may be the external covering.

(Matth. xv. 13.)—In thus answering the disciples who told him that the Pharisees were offended at his sayings, the thought of Jesus included the present and the future. As regards the present, he alluded to the doctrines and commandments of men which had arisen during the Hebrew period, and which had corrupted and perverted the divine law revealed to the Hebrews through Moses, which showed them the path of morality, duty, and progress by the Decalogue, and by the law of the love of God and of the neighbour. As regards the future, Jesus foresaw the phases and conditions of human progress, and alluded to the doctrines and commandments of men which would arise, and change

Digitized by Google

corrupt and falsify the law of love, and the sublime morality contained in his teaching and example, and summed up in the two commandments which he extended from the narrow limits of a nationality, to all the men of your planet, and which he declared to include all the Law and the Prophets.

He also alluded to doctrines and commandments which would corrupt and falsify the purely spiritual worship which he instituted upon earth; the inner worship of the soul by a pure heart, a good conscience and good works, under the one divine symbol of justice, love and charity, thus leading to fraternity, and through fraternity, to liberty and equality before God and man; and unity, and human brotherhood for all and between all, whether Jews or Gentiles. He alluded to doctrines and commandments arising from human interpretations which he knew would corrupt and falsify the revelation regarding his spiritual origin, which was veiled by the letter; and likewise the words which he spoke, and which would give rise to material and penitential practices, and to dogmas and commandments originating with, and instituted by men. These are plants which the Heavenly Father has not planted, and which shall be rooted up.

Do not find fault, for thus it was to be under the influence of the free-will of men, amid the efforts of thought according to the prejudices, traditions, intelligence, and phases of progress in succeeding ages. Just as the Hebrew era prepared for the advent of the Christian era, so under the empire and the veil of the letter, the Christian era has prepared for the advent of the new era of the Christianity of Christ, the spiritual era; and for the reign of the Spirit, which is still future as regards yourselves, but which will commence with the New Revelation.

Yes, every plant which the heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. You are forewarned by the Master that whatever offence may be given to the Pharisees of your own time, everything which does not proceed from the pure source will be rejected, in order that man may begin his course anew, guided by faith, hope, and love. And we say, like Jesus, and in his name, "Let those hear

Digitized by Google

who have ears to hear," for the time is come when the words "the letter killeth but the spirit quickeneth" shall be fulfilled.

The Spirit of Truth comes to commence and carry on this work of light, progress, and regeneration. He comes to destroy human doctrines and commandments, to recall men to the Christianity of Christ, to remind them of what Jesus said by explaining and developing his words in spirit and in truth, and to teach them progressively all truth, so far and in proportion as they are able to bear it. He comes to lead men to unity of belief, and the time is not far distant when different opinions must unite in one single and only truth: God is One, single and indivisible, the uncreated Creator of everything which exists; Jesus is a pure and perfect spirit, the protector and ruler of your planet and its humanity; and the spirits of the Lord are purified spirits subject to the gentle and much-loved power of our Head, receiving from him the orders of our Common Father, and acting as instruments devoted to your regeneration and happiness. These are designated under the veil of the letter, by the terms used in the Gospel: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of Truth comes to lead men back to the understanding and practice of the divine law which Jesus has revealed to them, according to the Spirit. He comes to lead men to practise justice, love, charity, and fraternity, and consequently liberty of thought and action, the source and means of all progress. He comes to lead them to practise equality before God and man, under the reciprocal and brotherly influence of tolerance, simplicity of heart, humility of mind, disinterestedness, self-renunciation (virtues and duties implying the predominance of spirit over matter), and kindness and benevolence towards all and among all; severity towards one's self, and indulgence towards others. The Spirit of Truth comes to lead men to the time when they shall no longer worship the Father on the mountain, nor in Jerusalem, but shall become more and more the worshippers desired by the Father, the true worshippers of

Digitized by Google

the Father in spirit and in truth, apart from all the external religions which still divide and separate them.

(Matth. xv. 14.)—These words of the Master apply to the Pharisees of your own days. Those who persist in walking in darkness and lead their brethren into it will suffer the same penalty until their eyes are opened, but the expiation will be longer and more painful, for those who have persisted in making themselves leaders of the blind, than for the blind whom they have led with them into the same pit. Let those hear who have ears to hear.

(Matth. xv. 11, 17–20; Mark vii. 14, 15, 18–23.)—By the teaching contained in these words, Jesus wished to make the Apostles, and through them all men, fully understand that all commandments relative to the nature of food, and to such material practices as fasting, or bodily privations which are useless and unprofitable to the neighbour, are vain and useless before God. He wished it to be fully understood that there is only one fast which is acceptable to God; moral and spiritual fasting, which consists in abstaining from everything which is evil, or contrary in thought, word, or deed to the divine law of justice, love, charity, and fraternity, which is revealed in the Gospels.

Do not be surprised that the reputed successors of the Apostles who are declared to be their heirs and consequently infallible, should walk in the steps of the Scribes and Pharisees, as regards human commandments and material practices; and that eighteen centuries after Jesus replied to Peter, we are obliged to repeat in the name of Christ and of the Spirit of Truth, "Are you still void of understanding?"

The Church which men made was human, and has acted humanly, forcing those who might oppose her to submit to her yoke; ruling over matter by material laws, and thinking little of developing the intelligence which might one day have led her to perceive that she had gone astray. The Church is not to blame for having made use of her material power at a time when men needed a curb, and when she alone was in a position to impose it upon them, but wherein lies her fault? In her inertia, and in her

Digitized by Google

stationary and even retrograde spirit. The ages advance, each bringing its share of civilization, progress, and light, but the Church alone wishes to keep the veil over the intelligence of man, she alone desires to keep up infancy, when full age is struggling to escape the trammels which she imposes on it. She has done well! man will use his intelligence in spite of her. How many who have been driven to repudiate her by the intelligence which she did not wish for, finding her too old to answer the aspirations of their hearts! Some have fallen back upon nothingness, and others have waited, not knowing whether to deny or to believe; but at length the hour of deliverance approaches, the bonds are about to fall off, and the enlightened and regenerated human spirit will forget all the vain toys of the Church, to arm itself openly with the arms of Christ.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 21–28. MARK, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 24–30.

The Canaanitish Woman.

Matth. xv. (21) And Jesus coming out thence, withdrew into the districts of Tyre and Sidon. (22) And behold a Canaanitish woman, coming from those districts, cried to him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is badly possessed, (23) And he did not answer her a word, and his disciples came and spoke to him, saying, Send her away, for she cries after us. (24) And he answered and said, I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (25) And she came and did homage to him, saying, Lord help me. (26) And he answered and said, It is not good to take the children's bread and cast it to the little dogs. (27) And she said, Yea, Lord, for the little dogs also eat of the crumbs of bread which fall from the table of their masters. (28) Then Jesus answered and said to her, O, woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

Mark vii. (24) And he arose and went forth thence into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. He entered into the house, desiring that no one should know, but he could not be hidden. (25) For a woman heard of him whose little daughter had an unpurified spirit; and she came and cast herself at his feet, (26) And the woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phœnician by birth, and she asked him to cast the demon out from her daughter. (27) And Jesus said to her, Let the children first be satisfied, for it is not fitting to take the children's bread and cast it to the little dogs. (28) And she answered, Yea, Lord, for the little dogs also eat of the children's crumbs under the table. (29) And he said to her, On account of this saying, go thy way, the demon has gone out of thy daughter. (30) And going away to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter thrown upon the bed.

Digitized by Google

§ 177. You have here an illustration of the course of Christianity, and of Spiritism which comes to finish the work. This woman who did not belong to the Jewish nation was by no means seriously repulsed by him who was all love and charity, but she was destined to serve as an example to men by showing them that however far they might be removed from Christian beliefs, the miracle that they hoped for might be wrought by faith in God. What brought this woman there, if it were not her confidence in the divine mission of Jesus? What inspired her answer if it were not a lively faith and unbounded confidence?

Yes, you may all be like the Canaanitish woman. You may all without exception obtain what you desire through the strength and tenacity of your faith, for it is not sufficient to raise your heart towards God, and then allow yourself to be depressed and discouraged if you do not instantly obtain what you ask. It is needful to persevere in faith, and to understand, that the desired miracle may be effected out of your sight, and to wait patiently till the return to the house. That is (to speak plainly to all intelligences), whatever you ask with faith and perseverance will always be granted; but not always under such conditions that your gross senses can instantly perceive them. The human mercy which you ask, will often only bear fruit in eternity; but it will bear fruit, you may rely upon that.

You must understand clearly why Jesus spoke and acted thus towards this woman. It was a lesson and example for the present and the future. He wished to call the attention of the Jews to the faith and perseverance of a woman who did not share their opinions. It was to consolidate the work which he had undertaken, that Jesus allowed them still to believe for a time in their superiority in the eyes of the Lord. Take notice that it was not until the end of his mission, and to his disciples only, that Jesus gave the command to go forth to preach to all the world. He made no allusion to the Gentiles in his public addresses, and all his attention seemed to be concentrated on the Jewish nation.

The Jews supposed that the children meant themselves;

Digitized by Google

but in the eyes of Jesus the children are those who believe and follow the divine law. At the present day the Church like the ancient Jews claims the monopoly of the divine family, while the Jews who live scattered over your globe regard themselves as the true children of God. And you? we will not say that you alone are the children who let the crumbs fall under the table to feed the little dogs; but you, Spiritists, are more ready than others to be called the children of God. Be therefore what those ought to be who desire to bear this great name worthily. Let your faith be strong; stand boldly by your opinions and your actions; never tamper with your conscience, and accept the children's bread, but distribute a large portion to the hungry little dogs who ask to share in the bread of life and truth. But for this you need a lively, active, and productive faith, shrinking from nothing, and frightened at nothing. You need a fruitful love, which sheds its holy seed over all the earth to stimulate it to produce good fruits. And what is most difficult of all to you, you require complete self-abnegation, a total forgetfulness of offences, a charity of the heart and lips, which not only pardons, but even forgets that it has been offended; a mutual help and support by which the strongest, the cleverest, the richest, and the most intelligent upholds him who is inferior to himself, without even perceiving his own superiority. You are told in blameworthy language that the hidden fault is forgiven; but we tell you truly that hidden kindness and pardon are ten times greater than those which make themselves felt, or which look for thanks.

Be ye then perfect as far as the imperfection of your nature permits. You can accomplish much; much more than you dare to hope. Exert all the resources of your intelligence, and all the powers of your heart to acquire the perfection that we expect of you, for it will exhale from your hearts like a fertilizing perfume, and will equalize the condition of man over all the earth by spreading the virtues which we preach to you in all hearts, and causing them to bear fruit.

Digitized by Google

Throw around you in profusion the crumbs that are given you to raise the hungry little dogs to the rank of the children of the Lord. Let the children be satisfied. These are all well-meaning men, whoever they are, and whatever may be their external worship or beliefs, who turn with faith to the light, and receive it. Let them be satisfied before the little dogs, who hold aloof from the table from which the crumbs of the bread of life and truth fall in abundance, and even refuse the bread which is offered them. These are those who reject the New Revelation from ignorance or prejudice, as the Scribes and Pharisees rejected the teachings of Christ, and afterwards those of the Apostles. The children are all those who seek out the truth, and strive to walk in the paths of justice, charity, love, and fraternity. In the eyes of the Lord, men are neither Catholics, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Pagans, Heretics, nor Orthodox, but are simply either submissive or rebellious to the Divine Law. Every one who strives to walk uprightly before the Lord, whatever name he bears, is the child of the Great Father.

As regards the daughter of the Canaanitish woman, it is enough to say that she was subjugated by an evil spirit. The obsessing spirit kept her always in motion, and forced her to abandon all the habits which are observed by more or less civilized races. She was freed from her sufferings at the moment that Jesus transmitted a mental command to the obsessing spirit. She was instantly restored to her right mind, and needed the rest which she had so long been unable to obtain; and therefore her mother found her lying on the bed.

MARK, CHAP. VII.—VERSES 31–37.

Cure of the Deaf Mute.

(31) And coming forth again from the borders of Tyre and Sidon, he came to the Sea of Galilee through the midst of the coast of Decapolis. (32) And they bring to him a deaf stammerer. And they implore him that he should lay his hand on him. (33) And taking him aside from the crowd by himself, he put his fingers in his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue. (34) And looking up to heaven, he groaned and

Digitized by Google

saith to him, Effatha; that is to say, Be opened. (35) And immediately his ears were opened, and the band of his tongue was loosened, and he spoke correctly. (36) And he commanded them not to relate it to any one, but the more he commanded them, the more they proclaimed it all about. (37) And they were excessively astonished, saying, He has done all things well, for he makes the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.

§ 178. We have discussed similar subjects several times already. At that time Jesus, the great physician of the mind, acted on matter, and appealed to the outward senses, but now he comes near to the blind and deaf, amid the great crowd of humanity, touches them with his benevolent finger, and says to them, "Effatha."

Raise your darkened minds to listen to the voices of the spirits of the Lord, who teach you his law. Open your eyes, which are veiled by matter, to see the brightness of the dawn of the new day which brings you the freedom of the Lord, which implies the free use of reason, the understanding of causes and effects, the application of knowledge and progressive advance in all things. Liberty is opposed to slavery, and the liberty of the Lord will break all your chains. Let your conscience be free, acknowledging no other guide than the love of God above all things, and loving your neighbour more than yourselves.

You are told that Jesus used outward means to cure the deaf and dumb man, but this was to set an example to his disciples and to mankind. Jesus could have restored speech and hearing to his patient by the mere act of his will through his magnetic power; but his disciples and their followers needed to concentrate their force, and to employ prayer to attain the same end, with the aid of the superior spirits who dispensed the appropriate fluids under their hands. It was, therefore, necessary for the Master to teach them the various modes of operating which were in their power.

Let not sceptics who know nothing of the magnetic power of the pure and superior spirits, or of the properties of fluids on the human organism, say that these authenticated facts called miracles are impossible, for they are all in accordance with the laws of nature.

Digitized by Google

Magnetism proves the possibility of similar facts. Congenital deafness and the dumbness which results from it are sometimes due to a lesion, and sometimes to an obstruction in the organ of hearing. The fluidic influence, acting on the tympanum when it is distended or thickened, dilates or contracts it according to necessity, frees the fluids which have collected or are imprisoned in the tissues, restores the flexibility of the organ, and the deaf man hears, and ceases to be dumb.

You may wonder that this man, who had never spoken since his birth, should have spoken immediately. You may suppose that his speech was not at first as distinct as yours, and that whatever words he pronounced were sufficient to astonish the crowd. But, as Spiritists, you can also understand that this action was of great importance to the belief which Jesus wished to inspire, and therefore the spirits who always accompanied him, aided him immediately with their spiritual magnetism to develop the new faculty that he had just given to this man, and to facilitate his use of it by their inspiration. Was not his guardian angel present with him then?

MATTHEW, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 29–39. MARK, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 1–10.

Sick Persons Healed.—The Seven Loaves.

(29) And Jesus, having passed on thence, came near the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up into the mountain, he sat down there. (30) And many crowds came to him, having with them lame, blind, deaf, maimed, and many others, and cast them at the feet of Jesus, and he healed them. (31) So that the crowds wondered, seeing the dumb speaking, the maimed healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing, and they glorified the God of Israel. (32) And Jesus called his disciples to him, and said, I compassionate the multitude because they have remained with me three days already, and they have nothing to eat, and I will not send them away fasting, lest they should be exhausted on the road. (33) And his disciples say to him, Whence have we so much bread in the desert that we can satisfy such a crowd? (34) And Jesus saith to them, How many loaves have you? And they answered, Seven, and a few little fishes. (35) And he ordered the multitudes to rest on the ground. (36) And taking the seven loaves and the fishes, he gave thanks, and broke them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. (37) And they all ate and were satisfied, and they took up the remainder of the fragments, seven

Digitized by Google

basketsful. (38) And they who had eaten were four thousand men, besides women and children. (39) And having sent away the crowds, he embarked in the boat, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

Mark viii. (1) In those days, when the crowd was very great, and had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples, and said to them, (2) I have compassion on the multitude, for they have already remained with me three days, and have nothing to eat. (3) And if I should send them away fasting to their homes, they would faint on the road, for some of them have come from a great distance. (4) And his disciples answered him, Whence shall any one be able to satisfy these with bread here in the wilderness? (5) And he asked them, How many loaves have you? And they said, Seven. (6) And he commanded the crowd to rest on the ground, and taking the seven loaves, he gave thanks, and brake, and gave them to his disciples to distribute them; and they distributed them to the multitude. (7) And they had a few small fishes; and having blessed them, he told them to distribute them also. (8) And they ate and were satisfied, and they took up seven basketsful of the fragments that were left over. (9) And they who had eaten were about four thousand; and he sent them away. (10) And he immediately embarked in the boat with his disciples, and came into the district of Dalmanutha.

§ 179. We need not repeat the explanations which we have already given of the cures which Jesus effected among the blind and dumb who were brought to him. Some were thus affected in consequence of subjugation, and others by physical diseases of the human organism. You know that in the former case the cure was effected by driving away the obsessing spirit, and by magnetic action, which put an end to the disorder which had thus been caused, and instantly restored the organs of speech and hearing to their normal state. In the second case, the cure was effected by the fluidic action of the powerful will and magnetic influence of Jesus. It was the same with all the other sick or infirm people. Jesus cured the cripples also by magnetic means, by restoring the elasticity which was wanting in the muscles.

You may refer to our former explanations of a similar miracle (§ 173) for information respecting the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. Do not wonder that the disciples asked, "How shall we find enough bread to satisfy the multitude?" They did not reflect upon what had happened before. Jesus repeated the miracle that it might lead to his subsequent explanation concerning the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 1–4. MARK, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 11–13.

The Pharisees and Sadducees ask for a Sign.

Matth. xvi. (1) And the Pharisees and Sadducees came to him tempting him, and asking him to show them a sign from heaven, (2) And he answered and said to them, When it is evening you say, Fine weather, for the sky is red. (3) And in the morning you say, To-day will be stormy, for the sky is red and gloomy. Hypocrites! you know how to distinguish the face of the sky, but can you not distinguish the signs of the times? (4) An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. And he left them behind and went away.

Mark viii. (11) And the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven, and tempting him. (12) And groaning in his spirit, he saith, Why does this generation seek a sign? Verily, I say to you, There shall no sign be given to this generation. (13) And leaving them, he embarked again in the boat, and crossed to the other side.

§ 180. These verses are of no importance. The terms Pharisees and Sadducees are a general expression used by the Apostles, for notwithstanding the historical and religious differences between the two parties, they were equally incredulous concerning the mission and doctrine of Jesus. The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus to test him; that is to prove him in the wrong, because they did not acknowledge that he was able to comply with their demands. They asked him to show them a sign in heaven, or some other useless demonstration of his power, but they had no definite idea what. They would have liked Jesus either to stop the course of the stars, or to make some vision appear in the sky. He who asks to see something often does not know what it is he wishes to see; and even if his desires were to be gratified at the expense of the laws of nature, he would try to explain it away from his own point of view, and would ask for something else.

The two versions both reproduce the words of Jesus and mutually complete each other. "This wicked and adulterous generation demands a sign from heaven. Verily I say to you, that no sign shall be given it but the sign of the prophet Jonah."*

* This is explained at § 161 (vol. ii. pp. 26–29).

Digitized by Google

You are told that Jesus groaned deeply. He wished to call the attention of his disciples to the miserable pride and blindness of these guilty spirits, which would subject them to a long and cruel expiation.

§ 181. Is it correct to apply the words of Jesus to those incredulous persons of the present day who demand a sign to prove the truth of Spiritism, in a similar spirit to the Scribes and Pharisees?

Most certainly.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 5–12. MARK, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 14–21.

Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Matth. xvi. (5) And his disciples, coming to the other side, had forgotten to take bread. (6) And Jesus said to them, See, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (7) And they talked among themselves, saying, We have taken no bread. (8) And when Jesus knew it, he said to them, Why do ye debate among yourselves, O ye of little faith, because ye have taken no bread? (9) Do ye not know nor consider the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up? (10) Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up? (11) How is it you did not know that I did not speak to you about bread when I told you to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees? (12) Then they understood that he did not speak to them about the leaven of bread, but about the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Mark viii. (14) And they had forgotten to take bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. (15) And he commanded them, saying, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. (16) And they debated with each other, saying, We have no bread. (17) And when Jesus knew it, he saith to them, Why do you debate because you have no bread? do you not know, neither understand? is your heart still hardened? (18) Having eyes, do you not see? and having ears, do you not hear? and do you not remember? (19) When I broke the five loaves among the five thousand, how many basketsful of fragments did you take up? They say to him, Twelve. (20) And when the seven among the four thousand, how many basketsful of fragments did you take up? (21) And they said, Seven. And he said to them, How is it that you do not understand?

§ 182. The disciples themselves give you the explanations of the words of Jesus by the interpretation which they put upon them. You also, new disciples of Jesus, must beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herod; that is, of all the promptings of pride. Beware of indolent submission to authority, so far as authority attempts to control your conscience and moral actions.

Digitized by Google

Be humble-minded and submit to your superiors, whoever they are; render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, but never forget that it is God who makes Cæsars, and that he has authority over all. But beware of an idle submission to authority. You should resist respectfully but firmly, all opposition whatsoever which seeks to hinder the fulfilment of the will of God through his good spirits who communicate with men to finish the work of the Christianity of Christ by means of the New Revelation, to regenerate humanity by light and truth, to establish universal fraternity by mutual justice, love, and charity, and thus to fulfil the words of Christ, "You have but one Master and are all brethren." Whatever opposition you may meet with you ought respectfully but firmly to claim the right to exercise your free will, and liberty of conscience. Truth must spread; therefore let it not be stifled in its birth.

MARK, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 22–26.

Cure of a Blind Man.

(22) And he comes to Bethsaida, and they bring him a blind man, and beseech him to touch him. (23) And taking the hand of the blind man, he led him out of the village, and spitting in his eyes, he laid his hands upon him, and asked him if he could see anything. (24) And looking up, he said, I see the men as if they were trees walking. (25) Then he laid his hands upon his eyes again, and made him look up, and he was completely restored, and saw everything distinctly. (26) And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the village, nor tell anybody in the village.

§ 183. Jesus was not alone, but accompanied as usual; and the order that he gave related to the vision of the blind man. When Jesus first laid his hands upon him, he opened his spiritual sight, and the man saw the spirits who were assembled round Jesus, and who appeared to his dull perceptions like men of gigantic stature. The second laying on of hands developed the physical organs, and the man then saw only men like himself, for his physical sight was restored to him.

The prohibition of Jesus referred to the first vision. Only his disciples had heard the words of the blind man, for the

Digitized by Google

crowd had been kept at some distance by the ring which the disciples formed round the Master.

When Jesus laid his hands on the blind man for the first time and opened his spiritual sight, he willed that the spirits who were assembled round him, should accidentally render the blind man clairvoyant by disengaging the spirit from matter. We can only explain this to you by referring to the action of magnetic spiritual phenomena. The action is the same without the sleep. We do not here refer to the phenomena of spiritual magnetism only, but also to human magnetism designed to develop spiritual sight. The spirit acquires greater power by contact with the human fluids which surround it: its perisprit is doubled as it were, by the emanations, and is enabled to separate itself from its bodily covering, and the spirit thus recovers a kind of liberty for the moment.

Magnetism is still only in its infancy. Man has too much neglected the power that the Lord has placed in his hands. He has scarcely glanced at the first page of the introduction of this great book of knowledge. Let him turn it over diligently, and lend all his attention to it. Magnetism is not an amusement for the curious; it is not an unimportant science destined only to relieve a few sufferers, but a grave and profound study, needing for success, unlimited disinterestedness, a lively faith, and an invincible love of the neighbour; with the aid of these three auxiliaries you may boldly pluck the fruits of the tree of knowledge, for you will reject evil with horror, and advance with long strides in the path of progress.

Magnetizers, we address ourselves specially to you. You have in yourselves the source of all discoveries and all knowledge. Let earnest toil open to you the pages of this great book, and you will discover some new beauty every day, and will see how great may be the power of men when sustained by the love of the good, the beautiful, and the true.

The earnest magnetizer wishing to aid in the progress of humanity should make a careful selection of somnambulists to second him in his researches. One alone is not suffi-

Digitized by Google

cient, for a spirit who is developed in one science may be completely ignorant of another. We do not speak here of human science, for the subject who is most simple-minded in the incarnate state may be far advanced spiritually, if he is also simple-hearted; and you know that disengagement may lead to revelations which are unsuspected by men, through the agency of superior spirits who make use of such a subject as their instrument.

In selecting subjects you should try to find pure and devoted hearts, and instruct them in magnetic science, by training them early and gradually for the kind of work for which they show themselves fit. In the ecstatic state one can assist a chemist, another can shed light on the dark pages of history, and another can solve mechanical problems over which men grow grey in vain endeavours to attain them. But for this end it is necessary that both the magnetizer and his subject should be pure in heart, seeking for no mundane profit in science. Otherwise both magnetizer and subject will find themselves deceived in their hopes, and deceitful spirits will spread their misleading veil over the most serious questions, for the superior spirits only approach him who is pure, according to the laws of spiritual attraction, and they only aid those who are pure in heart in their researches and studies, and who labour solely for the progress of humanity with perfect disinterestedness, and never seek to make a worldly use of their knowledge. These alone among you are worthy of being the auxiliaries of God and of the superior spirits in the advance and accomplishment of progress.

As magnetism is still in its infancy, you should study its tendencies and powers with care, in order to develop it. Apply yourselves to this, and you will arrive more rapidly at the culminating point to which all your efforts tend. What is the real condition of the somnambulist? That of the spirit when almost free from the body. The flesh is no more to him than an instrument which aids him to transmit his thoughts and sensations to you; just as you yourselves, both magnetizer and subject, are instruments of our own.

Digitized by Google

When the somnambulic condition is developed and often repeated, it raises the spirit by accustoming it to free itself from its chain, even during the waking state; and gradually, by diffusing its emanations round you, you will accustom man to live as it were out of himself. The atmosphere around you will become charged with these human fluids, and as the mirage which floats on the horizon grows out of the clouds which surround, and combine with it, so will these fluids attract the ambient fluids around you, and thus hasten the development of your faculties and the emancipation of your spirit.

When the blind man saw the spirits, he could not understand what passed before his spiritual vision, for he knew nothing of the effects of spiritual disengagement. Jesus afterwards spoke of his attendant spirits, when he said that if he desired, his Father would send thousands of angels to serve him. As these spirits were not bound to the earth, and as the more intelligent always rivet the attention, the spiritual eyes of the blind man were raised towards the superior regions of those whom he beheld.

In spiritual apparitions, or when the spirit of the seer is disengaged, what first strikes the attention is the seat of the spirit, the upper portion of the body, and it is only afterwards that he notices other forms provided that it is necessary; for they are generally veiled in a kind of mist.

Spiritual dimensions are not reckoned according to your measures. The spirits rising in space were taller than trees to the spiritual eyes of the blind man, and their indefinite forms did not keep his attention fixed on figures that he distinguished. We may add that spirits, although human in form, are generally more developed. In worlds superior to yours, the form of man himself increases in delicacy of outline, and in size.

As your earth is still morally an inferior world, magnetic-spiritual phenomena are often caused by evil spirits who produce violent, painful, or dangerous fluidic effects, such as corporeal or moral subjugations. At other times, they

Digitized by Google

are caused by frivolous and deceitful spirits, who produce mystifications. Nevertheless these effects take place under the supervision of the spirit guides. However violent or dangerous they appear, it is only because they form part of the series of experiences which the incarnate spirit must undergo, and the protecting spirits let them take their course.

There is a purpose in all things, and if you carefully seek for the causes which have led to mystification, you will always find either systematic incredulity, presumptuous confidence, an inexperienced credulity which needs to be enlightened, or else to the incarnate spirit is commissioned to convey some lesson to those present.

When Jesus laid his hands on the blind man, his sight was restored to him by the powerful will and magnetic action of the Master. His complaint was an accidental blindness of long duration. Jesus had no need to spit on his eyes, and lay his hands on him, or to open his spiritual vision; but he acted thus to teach, and to set an example to the present and the future.

As regards his disciples, he had a double object. Firstly, he desired to teach them the various modes of operating (as is explained at p. 96), and, secondly, by opening the spiritual sight of the blind man, he called their attention to various mysteries of the other world; the immortality of the soul, and its individuality after death. This was confirmed by the knowledge of spiritual apparitions which some of them had acquired through seeing medianimity, as is also the case at the present time with some of you.

By opening the spiritual sight of the blind man, he likewise showed the men of the future (especially those who should be enlightened by the New Revelation, and who should accept the spiritual light) that the man whose spirit is dominated by matter is morally and intellectually blind in a spiritual point of view; that he can only recover his sight in proportion as his spirit frees itself sufficiently to dominate over matter; that this leads to the moral progress of which the opening of the spiritual sight of the blind man is an

Digitized by Google

emblem; that moral progress is the source, instrument, and means of material and intellectual progress symbolized by the restoration of physical sight; and that this opens to man under spirit-influence the progressive knowledge of the mysteries of the other world, the discoveries and secrets of divine science, and the horizons of the infinite.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 13–20; MARK, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 27–30; LUKE, CHAP. IX. VERSES 18–21.

Reincarnation.—Mission of Peter.

Matth. xvi. (13) And when Jesus came into the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? (14) And they said, Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. (15) He saith to them, And whom say ye that I am? (16) And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (17) And Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father in the heavens. (18) And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not hinder it. (19) And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and that which thou bindest upon earth shall be bound in the heavens, and what thou loosest upon earth shall be loosened in the heavens. (20) Then he commanded his disciples to tell no one that he is Jesus the Christ.

Mark viii. (27) And Jesus and his disciples went forth into the villages of Cæsarea Philippi, and he questioned his disciples on the road, saying to them, Whom do men say that I am? (28) And they answered, John the Baptist, but others say, Elijah, and others, One of the prophets. (29) And he saith to them, And whom say ye that I am? And Peter answered and said to him, Thou art the Christ. (30) And he objected to their telling any one about him.

Luke ix. (18) And it came to pass that while he was alone, praying, his disciples came to him, and he questioned them, saying, Whom do the multitudes say that I am? (19) And they answered and said, John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and others that one of the prophets of the ancients has risen again. (20) And he said to them, And whom say ye that I am? And Peter answered and said, The Christ of God. (21) And he cautioned them not to make this announcement to any one.

§ 184. A special and distinct explanation is here necessary.

(Matth. xvi. 13–17; Mark viii. 27–29; Luke ix. 18–20).—These verses are designed to remind men of the principles

Digitized by Google

of Reincarnation, and also to fix their attention on the medianimic relations which may exist between themselves and spiritual influences. Jesus thus sanctioned beforehand what it was reserved for the New Revelation to demonstrate, explain, and develop in spirit and in truth from both points of view.

Firstly, they confirm in a few words the great truth of Reincarnation, which is doubted and rejected by so many. Matth. xvi. 13, 14, shows us that public opinion attributed a spiritual origin to Jesus anterior to his present existence in a new body.

This report implied both the pre-existence of the soul and Reincarnation, and spread without being questioned, because the Hebrews were taught by ancient though confused traditions, that a man could return several times to the earth to complete a task that he had undertaken, but which had been interrupted by his death.

To return to Jesus. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews who alike reject the pre-existenee of the soul and Reincarnation, do you doubt the superior mission of Jesus? Christians! it is the basis of your faith, for you derive his origin from the throne of the Eternal. Jews! you cannot but admire the character of the Reformer, even though you revile him; for you treated him as your fathers treated the prophets. At length you admit that he was a man of superior genius, and animated by good intentions; in short, a Reformer. What is the answer of this man whose knowledge amazed the doctors of the law, even at the age of twelve years?

Zealous Catholics! what is the answer of him who descended from the Father to bring light to men, and whom you say had beheld the secrets of nature and creation from all eternity? Did he reprove his disciples on account of a widely-diffused heresy? he who came to teach them truths from on high? Did he tell them that the soul is created for the body which it inhabits, and can never return to the earth when it has once left it? Did he tell them that the creation of the soul is so closely linked with that of the

Digitized by Google

body, that when they are separated, the soul no longer possesses human thought nor active life, but is lost in space in a manner very difficult to explain? According to the Catholic Church, what becomes of those who are dead and are said to be tainted with original sin?

There is such a variety of opinions on this point, that it is difficult to state them, and in setting them forth as we have done, we have brought forward the view of the Catholic Church or at least of its ministers. What is to become of him who has not been baptized? Damnation? Has he deserved it? Limbo, if he has lived in ignorance? Is this justice on the part of the Lord? What has the new-born infant done to make him undeserving in the sight of the Lord? And what has he done even after baptism to be ranked among the elect? What has the sincere and intelligent man done who has accidentally missed baptism, that he should be confined amongst those infantile souls who are condemned to an eternity without sorrow, but equally without joy? Would you send a man to Purgatory to expiate for a longer or shorter period the sin of being born in darkness instead of in the light, and for not having worked out for himself the Catholic faith, which so many know and neglect because it does not harmonize with their intelligence? You can easily perceive that all these various positions are equally inadmissible to thinking men. But Jesus, instead of reproving his disciples for accepting an error, and telling them that the soul is created for the flesh which it inhabits, and neither can nor ought to return to the earth, contented himself with rejoining, "And whom say ye that I am?" Does not this simple question confirm the principle implied, and admit the possibility that he might have been John the Baptist, or Elijah, or Jeremiah, or some one else? Jesus spoke with reference both to the present and the future. His language respecting Reincarnation needed to be veiled, for the time was not yet come to reveal its principles and consequences openly to men.

(Matth. xvi. 16, 17.)—Peter, who was gifted with medianimic faculties in a very high degree, was, unconsciously

Digitized by Google

to himself, rendered a speaking medium. This passage unfolds to you the entire revelation thus made through Peter, as well as the future revelations to be made by the spirits of the Lord, through sincere and humble-minded mediums like Peter; their chosen instruments to transmit the truth to men.

Do not defend the inspiration and revelations of the "saints" and the "Fathers of the Church" by saying, "They were mediums, and we must receive their words blindly." We can explain to you, who know the truth, why you should not defend those reputed, but often false inspirations; but what importance will the incredulous attach to our explanations? Do you not know that spirit influence has existed in all ages, and that there have always been mediums, some of whom perfectly understood the source of their knowledge, while others were ignorant of it?

Thus the Apostles, Disciples, and Evangelists wrought the miracles of the faith which they taught, by their medianimic powers, and with the aid of the spirits of the Lord, and thus spread the faith among ignorant and material men. The Apostles and their disciples were mediums of various powers, as the instruments of the great superior wills above them. Their work was afterwards carried on by their disciples, the first Fathers of the Church of Christ. We do not speak of those who perform acts of faith among the clergy, but of the sincere and devoted early Christians who died obscure and unknown after a laborious and dangerous life of propaganda, but who did not seek for publicity or spiritual honours.

At a later period, medianimity gradually fell into disuse, because it was needful for events to take their course, that these might be a fusion of all nations, whether advanced or backward, and because this knowledge would have led to great disorders, if it had become general, while men were wicked and surrounded by evil spirits. Where one man would have walked in the ways of the Lord, thousands would willingly have consorted with spirits of as low a moral grade as themselves.

Digitized by Google

Thus it was necessary that medianimity should gradually become restricted to a few, subsequently to the rise of Christianity, and should then disappear altogether, or at least remain in abeyance, so that the existence of these faculties was forgotten by all; and those whose pride or cupidity led them to make use of them, were imprisoned or burned. During the long period which followed the rise of Christianity, which was filled with clerical and religious despotism, ignorance, intolerance, and fanaticism, you see mediums, whether conscious or unconscious of the influence, treated as sorcerers, either by the secular powers, or by the Roman Inquisition.* These mediums were regarded as possessed by the demon, or as heretics, though some were sincere believers, who were subject to physical manifestations caused by evil influences, while others were free-thinkers, who proclaimed truths and doctrines contrary to the teachings of the human Church, under good influences.

The Fathers of the Church were mediums, as we have said; but you know that medianimity is dangerous to those who do not know how to use it; for the incarnate spirit attracts to himself spirits who are in sympathy with his tendencies, preconceived ideas, or general tone of thought, according to the prejudices or traditions of his surroundings. Thus a medium may be the instrument of deceitful spirits, unconsciously to himself, though it is palpable to others. On the other hand, he may be the instrument of good spirits, when he is chosen, like Peter, to reveal a truth which the Lord desires to make known at that period.

Are you not aware, too, that conjuring, or the exaltation of the incarnate spirit, may be mistaken for, or passed off as inspiration, when it is only the result of a weak or wicked organization? Do you believe that high and holy influences have given rise to the fastings, macerations, and flagellations

* This very persecution supplies us with a satisfactory explanation, on recognised scientific principles, of the comparative rarityof medianimic phenomena in modern times. See Wallace's "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," pp. 22 and 23, note.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

enjoined by some religions, or to lives spent idly and uselessly apart from the battles and temptations of the world, but also apart from its victories ;—lives wasted in retreats, amid mortifications which the "demon" only could inspire, but which the God of love and mercy rejects ?

Could He who entrusted life to man as a precious deposit which he ought to preserve, and of which he must render a strict account ; could he approve of the tortures which the recluses inflicted upon themselves, and which seemed to have no other use but to shorten their existence, and to alter its end and object, which every man should pursue according to the divine law, by practising the law of love proclaimed by Christ, and which he sanctioned by his teaching and example ?

Although the saints and Fathers of the Church were sometimes inspired, and their medianimity was unconscious, and often obvious, yet some evil influence was also frequently present, due to one or other of the various causes which we have mentioned ; and this led to errors or abuses under the guise of miracles or revelations from on high, which the Church regarded as infallible when they took place among those whose sanctity she regarded as proved by their mysticism or asceticism, and by the observance of all her material rites and ceremonies.

(Matth. xvi. 18, 19).—These words should be understood in a spiritual, and therefore medianimic sense. Peter, being an advanced and developed medium, was a powerful instrument in the hands of the spirits of the Lord for the dissemination of the light. All the disciples of Jesus contributed to this, but each had his own special mission ; and Peter, whose physical organization was sufficiently pliable to lend itself to all medianimic influences, was a more elevated spirit than the other faithful Apostles, in intelligence, if not in purity, and had more extended powers. He was thus the foundation-stone of the edifice, and it was upon him that the Church of Christ was constructed ; for the faculty which he possessed became more and more developed, and formed the chief corner-stone. All true Spiritists, and especially

Digitized by Google

sincere and humble mediums, may work to construct this edifice, each contributing your stone, and you may thus "bind and loose" on earth, by the light which you will receive and shed around you more and more; and the Lord will "bind and loose" in heaven.

You must not suppose that man, who is always a sinner, can absolve or condemn, or pass judgment on earth without appeal, even before God. But those who live in integrity of heart and soul always receive increasing light from the good spirits, and thus become more and more fitted to judge of earthly and heavenly things, to direct their brethren in the right way, and to distinguish those who wander from it, and those who follow it faithfully. This explanation is needed, because the Church has completely perverted the meaning of these words.

(Matth. xvi. 18.)—These words were addressed to Peter specially, but formed the starting-point of the widely accredited error of the infallibility of the Pope, who is called the successor of Peter. He is the successor of the clerical organization, but not of the worship based upon the emblem of the paschal sacrifice.

Peter was an advanced and devoted spirit, and a most excellent medium (as was necessary), and he was gifted with unusually clear perceptions, by the will of Jesus and of the superior spirits. His piercing eye sounded the depths of the conscience, and the most secret thoughts of the heart. Was he not in sympathy with the divine messengers before his mission began? He could thus bind and loose on earth, for he did no more than pronounce decrees which had been delivered to him spiritually; but, since his time, how many of those who have called themselves his successors have been like Peter?

The Church of Christ originated in the assembly of faithful adherents chosen by Peter and the other Apostles, who were aware of his superiority to themselves, and often followed his directions in their efforts to spread the good news. This Church was composed of sincere believers, who accepted the doctrine of love which the Master came to

Digitized by Google

teach. Some were Jews, and others Gentiles; but from whatever soil the stone may have been dug, it helps to form the monument.

The Church of Christ is composed of all the children of the Lord who are submissive and zealous, and are willing, even when they cannot act. But it does not consist of temples built by man, which, as Paul says, God does not inhabit. Every one forms part of the Church of Christ (whatever may be the outward religion in which he has been born through reincarnation) who sincerely endeavours with all his might to follow the divine law, which is written in the hearts of all men.

(Matth. xvi. 18).—Peter presides over the progress of the faith and the development of intelligence. He watches over the fulfilment of the promises of Jesus, and has retained his spiritual mission, after accomplishing his human mission, during which he began to build the Church of Christ with the aid of the Apostles and the disciples who assembled round them. He continues and will complete the work by his spiritual mission.

You must understand that as the Church of Christ is composed of all the children of the Lord, suffering and expiation cannot affect a man who has lived in integrity of heart and soul, and has endeavoured to fulfil all his obligations and duties according to the divine law towards the Lord and towards men. When Peter was accomplishing his earthly mission, he was an energetic and devoted disciple who was faithful unto death. Whoever shall build upon such a foundation need not fear the gates of Hades: that is to say, expiation, and the sufferings of remorse; for his conduct will be just and pure.

(Matth. xvi. 19.)—"The keys of the kingdom of the heavens" signify the exact knowledge of the method of attaining to moral perfection. Jesus then referred to the present and future, relatively to Peter. As regards his human mission, the words "bind and loose" allude to his power of pronouncing spiritual decrees. As regards his spiritual mission in the present age, when the predicted era of the advent of the

Digitized by Google

Spirit is in preparation, these words signify that Peter will bind and loose on earth, when the faculty that he possessed during his life will continue to increase, and will aid in the construction of the Church of Christ, of which he is the chief corner-stone. He will likewise teach men to bind and loose by transmitting (through true Spiritists, and especially sincere and humble mediums) the truth, and the means of attaining to moral perfection. This does not mean that men will absolve or condemn, for this power belongs only to God, and to his Christ, to whom he has given unlimited power over your planet, but that they will live in integrity of heart and soul, and receive more and more light and aid from the good spirits, and thus grow continually better able to judge of earthly and heavenly things; to direct their brethren in the right way, and to see clearly who follows it faithfully, and who wanders from it.

Jesus forbade his disciples to tell any one that he was the Christ of God, because it would have interfered with the necessary course of events.

§ 185. The Church of Rome appropriates to herself the power and mission of Peter, as his successor, and proclaims "Out of the Church, there is no salvation."

We have told you that the words of Jesus were addressed to Peter personally; and no man on your earth could or ought to apply them to himself. The Church has completely perverted and falsified the meaning of these words by human interpretations, based on the letter which killeth, in ignorance of the Spirit which giveth life. The Church might indeed appropriate these words to herself, in their true spiritual sense, if she walked simply in the path marked out by Jesus; and all men (Jews or Gentiles) might likewise lay claim to them if they walked in this path, with the aid, inspiration, and support of good spirits, like the Apostle Peter. But they do not apply to those of the clergy who perform acts of faith, but to the sincere and devoted early Christians, and their imitators.

Let the Church return to the path which she has quitted, and follow the footsteps of the Apostles, in the light of the

Digitized by Google

New Revelation. Let the pastor who claims to be the successor of Peter, cast aside his purple robes, and let him repair and uphold his Church, which rests, or ought to rest, on faith; and it will be given to him to bind and loose, in the true sense of these words; to work at the construction of the Church of Christ, and to aid in its guidance. But faith is humble, and shuns pomp and splendour; its sight is dimmed by the lustre of gold and purple; and the jewels of the tiara have caused it to forget the simple staff, coarse mantle, and bare feet of Peter; and Faith has fled in alarm to take refuge among the simple and faithful. Open your hearts to Faith, for she seeks and calls you, and asks for a home among you. Do not reject her advances, and when the time has come, the successors of Peter will descend from the throne to sit on the moss by the wayside.

When the sceptre of the "Head of the Church" has given place to the pilgrim's staff; when the purple has been cast aside, and the coarse mantle shall cover the shoulders of those whom men call "the Holy Father," and the Cardinals, (for all must return to the humility from which they should never have departed); then the faith in your hearts will rise up, strong and powerful, to rule over the Church of Christ once more. The successor of St. Peter will extend his holy hand to bless the universe, and the universe will accept his benediction, when he shall proclaim to the Catholics, "Rise up; I am a man like yourselves, and I verily believe that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he who fears him, and whose works are righteous is acceptable to him." And he shall proclaim to all men whomsoever, whatever their outward forms of religion, "God has taught me to call no man on earth profane or impure. Call no man Father on earth, for you have all one Father in the heavens; call no man Master, for you have but one Teacher, and therefore but one Master; Christ; and ye are all brethren. Follow the teachings and example of the Master, and his simple and sublime morality, by endeavouring to walk in his steps. Love God your Creator above all, and your neighbour as yourself; for these two commandments include

Digitized by Google

all the Law and the Prophets. Love one another, for the end of all the commandments is the charity which springs from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith which shows itself in words and actions; for each will be requited according to his works, and all will be judged by and through their works. Reject all the doctrines and commandments of men, and worship the Father neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem, and join yourselves, whether Jews or Gentiles, and apart from all external forms of worship, to the great human family; and thus yield more and more to the sway of the law of love, fraternity, and unity. Be ye thus the true worshippers required by the Father; the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth; and there shall thus be one fold and one shepherd, Christ; and the Church of Christ will be erected, for you will all be the children of the Lord. Labour, therefore, at the work of regeneration, for you are all called to be elected."

Pray that it may be thus, my children; we are all labouring zealously towards this end, and the time is at hand. May the Lord extend his powerful hand over you.

PETER blesses you.

§ 186. The Roman Church asserts that she is always aided and inspired by the Holy Spirit, and consequently infallible; and avails herself of these pretensions to denounce the Spiritual Revelation as subversive of her teaching and authority.

This is a human pretence, originating in pride and presumption. It is a blind and false assertion, which no thinking man can admit; for the infallibility of the Church must also imply the infallibility of the men who compose it.

You must not suppose that the mysterious influence which directs your important actions would guide you if you rendered yourselves unworthy of communion with high and holy spirits. The Holy Spirit under whose inspiration the leaders of the Church pretend to dictate their laws, would not descend to animate impure bodies, or whited sepulchres; and many have not even taken the trouble to become so! The secret influence which guides man according to the will of God, is only granted when the recipient is worthy to receive it.

Digitized by Google

Is there unity in their councils? Were the leading bishops and cardinals of the Church unanimous in their discussions and decisions, and do you believe that the justice and equity which they call the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, are always on the side of the majority? Were truth, faith, and virtue always to be found there? Surely not. Have you not seen divided opinions in their councils? But if the members had all been inspired by the Holy Spirit, there would have been no difference of opinion. Have their decisions always been conformable with the justice and equity which you have a right to expect from them? or have you found material and personal interests clothed in the garb of religion, instead?

Have you not seen treachery and revenge arming themselves with the cross to combat "heresies," and to condemn the innocent, under the influence of the very intolerance and dogmatism which the Divine Model has proscribed? Where was their inspiration during their debates? Where was the Holy Spirit, and what were its functions?

In speaking of the Holy Spirit, we have confined ourselves to the language of the Roman Church. We might have spoken of the superior and good spirits, for the Holy Spirit is only a figurative expression, denoting the sacred phalanx of the spirits of the Lord; but the Church does not admit this, and still teaches the erroneous opinion of the Hebrews that the Holy Spirit is God himself; and she considers it a separate, though indivisible part of the great Whole.

§ 187. The Roman Church pretends that auricular confession was instituted by Jesus (Matth. xvi. 19; John xx. 22, 23), and that it is therefore obligatory.

This is another human error, which has arisen from the Church attributing to herself the words which Jesus addressed to Peter and the Apostles personally; and she has thus completely mistaken and falsified their meaning and object. When Jesus said to the Apostles, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," he spoke in reference to what he

Digitized by Google

had previously said, "Receive the Holy Spirit;" and thus gave them personally the power to translate into human language the decrees which had been spiritually revealed to them by the superior spirits who were to direct them in the accomplishment of their mission.

Jesus never ordained confession as the Church has organized it. The starting-point was rational; but the origin of confession was the act of humility which every Christian was obliged to make, by publicly acknowledging to his brethren the faults which he had committed, or even meditated.

The principle of this was founded on Jesus having said to his disciples, "Confess to one another." By this he implied, "Bear open witness to your faith, one to another, and conceal nothing which might conduce to your mutual support."

On this account Jesus has commissioned us to repeat his actual words, and although they were not recorded, and have therefore no *human* authenticity, yet the disciples learned them from their Master, and repeated them. James said to the early Christians (v. 16), "Confess your faults to one another, and pray for one another." And Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, says, writing to the Hebrews (iii. 12, 13; x. 24, 25), "Take heed, brethren, lest there should be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But encourage each other daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you should be hardened by the deceit of sin. . . . . And let us consider one another to provoke to love and good works; not neglecting the assembling of them, as is the custom with some, but encouraging each other, and so much the more as you see the day approaching."

The first Christian assemblies consisted of brethren who confessed aloud, before all, the faults which they had committed, and the weaknesses and failings to which they had yielded. This was the origin of confession, which gradually became more restricted, and was finally heard by one only, who was humanly commissioned to absolve or to condemn. Nevertheless at the commencement of this

Digitized by Google

decision, the confessor, who was no longer the sinner who proclaimed his faith, his failings, his weaknesses, and his faults in public, but had become the confidant of his brothers, was required (without naming the guilty party) to submit the facts to the judgment of an assembly composed of the bishop and the deacons of the Church, and to communicate to the penitent the absolution or the condemnation which they pronounced. But as the great extension of Christianity and the number of penitents made the length of these proceedings more and more inconvenient, the power of judgment was finally vested altogether in the confessor.

The words of Jesus, "Confess to one another," imply that human equality and complete fraternity required that he who had just made a sincere confession before the assembly of his brethren, should in his turn listen to the confession of each of those present, and thus after having been the culprit, he became the judge.

When this confession was practised in sincerity, it restrained men by the fear of revealing even a doubtful thought, and inspired them with indulgence towards each other, for each feared the judgment of his brethren, and consequently set the example of fraternal charity; but can you suppose that confession of this kind could long remain possible?

Men were led astray by the new vices of a new era, and gradually absented themselves from the Christian assemblies; and the confession of faults would have entirely ceased if it had been maintained in its primitive purity. It therefore became necessary to restrict the audience, and confession was made before a small selected number of upright men. Then, as license increased, the need of still further restricting the number became obvious; and at length the duty of hearing the confession of faults was confided to one man only. Thus abuses crept in among those who were chosen to hear the confessions of their brethren, and to guide them by their advice. They frequently made an unworthy use of these confessions, and betrayed secrets which they ought to have kept.

The disciples of Jesus and their first followers were

Digitized by Google

animated by an enlightened zeal; and being guided by the spirits of the Lord who were always ready to reveal the truth to them, they themselves had power to bind and to loose. Their successors were unworthy of this privilege, and wandered from the faith, though unwilling to lose the prerogative of infallibility. They also desired to bind and to loose, but the bonds which they have bound on your souls have never made any impression upon them, whereas those which they have loosed have often left deep traces behind. There is none infallible save God, and spirits only share in his infallibility in proportion to the inspirations which they receive, more or less directly from him, according to their rank in the spiritual hierarchy. Every spirit who has taken upon himself a fleshly body by human incarnation, is subject to the imperfections of the flesh. He may resist them more or less, but will always feel their influence.

The disciples of Jesus and their immediate followers were animated by an enlightened zeal, and inspired by the spirits of the Lord, and therefore possessed the power to bind and to loose, in the sense of being able to judge of the purity or the culpability of those who sought their advice, and consequently their judgment was just; but none of them ever claimed the right to judge without appeal, and to absolve or to condemn. Do you not sometimes say to a criminal, "Do not commit this action, for you put yourself within reach of the law, and render yourself liable to such and such a punishment?" Do you not think, when you hear of the suicide of one of your brethren, that his expiation will be long and painful? And if you were near him when he was about to commit a desperate action, which would involve him in cruel sufferings, would you not exclaim, "Stay, madman; the sword is raised over your head; your hereafter will be filled with tortures; you will continually behold your mutilated body, and reproach yourself for having deprived it of the existence which was entrusted to it. In the name of God, as well as for your own sake, stay your hand!"

We have given you two illustrations, one from the human

Digitized by Google

and one from the divine law. If you know the law, you can also foresee the punishment which it prescribes for such and such an offence. In the other case, spirit revelations enable you to foresee the punishment of an act which is reprehensible in the sight of God. It was thus that the Apostles and disciples received light, being inspired and directed by the spirits of the Lord.

§ 188. What have you to say about auricular confession, as organized by the Roman Church?

It will cease, but the time has not yet come. It is misleading to those who desire to walk in the ways of the Lord. It is a restraint upon weak minds; but it is, unfortunately, sometimes an abuse also; for the good in humanity is always surrounded with evil. For one timid and obedient person who is upheld by the advice of a pious and enlightened priest, there are a hundred at least who only visit the confessional to fulfil a form prescribed by the ritual. There are others who laugh at it, and turn it into a scandal; and many avoid it, having found that their spiritual guides abused their confidence, and made use of family secrets to their own advantage, but not to that of their penitents, and sought to turn the minds of men from the greatness and justice of God to imprison them in a round of trivial ideas and practices, which hamper them, and prevent them from turning to the Lord.

But these materialistic practices will one day cease, and men will perceive that they should love their God in the sincerity of their hearts, and that the best mode of showing their love to him is to walk in his path. Submission to the Father's will is the greatest proof of love which the son can give.

When worship shall be wholly comprised in sincere adoration, and in the practice of good works, love, charity, and fraternity, men will have become the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, and will pursue the search for truth, in religion and science, with humility and disinterestedness, with no other object than that of personal and general progress. Then all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, will still

Digitized by Google

assemble in temples (independently of all external forms which now divide and separate them), to sing the praises of the Lord, and to extol his glory and his mercies. But he who is chosen unanimously by those present as the most worthy will preside over these solemn assemblies, and men will then vie with each other in love and virtue; for the elect of the assembly, the leader of the faithful, will be sure of the protection of the spirits of the Lord, and his revelations will be enlightened, and free from doubt and uncertainty. It is then that confession will cease to be the law of the Church, and will become a necessity of the soul. He who feels himself weak will come forward publicly to ask his brethren to aid him with their prayers; and in assemblies of one mind and one faith, will ask the protecting spirits to deliver him from evil thoughts, and to uphold his sinking courage.

Doubt not that the day of the kingdom of the Lord will yet come; and let not its delay discourage you, for the materials are not all ready, but the labourers are at work, and are shaping the stones which will serve to build the temple of the Lord.

§ 189. The Roman Church pretends that her system of auricular confession enables her to bind and to loose, and to absolve or retain sins; "Not," say the ministers, "by a mere declaration of the work of God on the sinner, but by a judicial act, and a sentence pronounced by the authority of a judge, binding by excommunication, and by the refusal or delay of absolution, and God will confirm the judgment of the ministers of the Catholic Church when they judge according to the rules which he prescribes for them in his word and in the Church."

Has anything but the pride of man led him to claim such a power as his own? An inferior creature, subject to all the vicissitudes of matter, and held in all the bonds of vice! Is it not the pride of man which has led him to imagine that God is the blind and yielding instrument of his revenge, his instincts, and his policy, who will ratify his uncontrolled decisions? It is the madness of pride, which leads man either to deny his God, or to set himself in his place.

Let the Church start afresh from the point where Peter and the Apostles and their first disciples left her. She will then discover the Church of Christ, which they began to build, and which the Spirit of Truth is gradually completing

Digitized by Google

through the New Revelation. Let her seek to understand the true sense of the words which Jesus addressed to Peter and the Apostles, and which we have now revealed to you in the name of the Master; and then she also, like true Spiritists, will labour at the erection of the Church of Christ, under the inspiration of the Spirit of Truth. Then will the Church be really able to loose and to bind; not to absolve or to condemn her brethren, but to live in integrity of heart and soul, and to receive more and more light from the good spirits, and thus become more and more fitted to judge of earthly and heavenly things, and (apart from all external observances) to direct her brethren in the right course; and to perceive plainly those who walk in that path, and those who wander from it.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 21–23. MARK, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 31–33. LUKE, CHAP. IX.—VERSE 22.

Jesus foretells his "Death;" and rebukes Peter.

Matth. xvi. (21) From that time Jesus began to show to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and high priests and scribes, and be put to death, and raised up on the third day. (22) And Peter laid hands on him, and began to object, saying, Be it far from thee, O Lord, this shall not be unto thee. (23) And he turned round and said to Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art a stumbling-block to me, for thou understandest not the things of God, but the things of men.

Mark viii. (31) And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and high priests and scribes, and be put to death, and rise again after three days. (32) And he spoke this saying openly. And Peter came to him, and began to reproach him. (33) And he turned round, and looking on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou understandest not the things of God, but the things of men.

Luke ix. (22) Saying, The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be put to death, and raised again on the third day.

§ 190. (Matth. xvi. 21; Mark viii. 31; Luke ix. 22.) Jesus descended upon earth to offer men the strongest proof and the highest example of love and self-denial which was possible. It was needful to prepare his disciples for this important act of his mission, that it might be obvious to the

Digitized by Google

eyes of all, both then and in future, that the death and crucifixion of Jesus were foreseen, and not purely human events.

In speaking of his "death" and "resurrection," Christ expressed himself in terms that men could understand. He was to suffer the change of death under a corporeal human appearance, and then, independently of the fleshly body which he seemed to bear, he was to show himself to the eyes of men, to establish his identity. It was therefore needful that these men should be warned of the event beforehand in order to understand it, for even the disciples would not have understood the fact of the reappearance of Jesus among them, unless they had regarded it in the light of a "resurrection" in the sense in which they understood the word.

You must, however, take notice that the Hebrews looked upon the resurrection as the return of the spirit into a material body of flesh, but without considering whether it was always the same body. It returned to a material body; but they never inquired into its origin or its end. The disciples and the Hebrews, however, understood the resurrection which Jesus foretold to imply the return of the spirit to the same body. It was on this account that Jesus allowed Thomas to put his hand into his side, and his fingers into the wounds in his hands and feet; for his tangible perispritic body resumed the consistency and appearance of the human body. You have been informed of the nature of the body of Jesus, and know that he was always a spirit, even when clothed with this tangible perisprit, and submitting, for the needs of his earthly mission, to a visible presence among men. But there was neither death nor resurrection in the sense attached to those expressions, but simply appearances.

The sufferings endured by Jesus on the cross were wholly moral. The blood which flowed from the wounds was a fluidic compound, resembling blood. We are aware that these revelations will alarm many who lay great stress on the physical tortures of the Great Example who has been set before them; but they must nevertheless reconcile themselves to regarding Jesus as wholly a spirit, and superior to all others who aided in the formation and development of your

Digitized by Google

planet. Jesus was a pure spirit, who assumed a visible form to human eyes, but his sufferings were wholly moral, and were caused by his love for his pupils, and his sorrow at beholding them so hardened. He thus experienced the same suffering which is felt by a tender mother who is forced to punish a darling child.

As Christ existed in spiritual life, and was clothed by a tangible perisprit resembling the human body, the crucifixion and accompanying actions were fruitless in a physical point of view. This is self-evident, because his body was not composed of human matter, like that of the men of your planet. Could they have any effect upon a spirit who appeared in a visible and tangible condition?

Reflect upon the sentiments by which Jesus was actuated, the mission which he came to fulfil, and the example which he set to mankind. He contented himself with pronouncing aloud the words which we shall explain further on, and which were summed up in his exclamation, "It is finished; Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He thus set men an example of the resignation, obedience, and submission with which they should bow to the decrees of their sovereign Master. The last exclamation of Jesus was not a cry of suffering; for, when he appeared to men to yield up the ghost, he cried out to call their attention at the supreme moment, and to teach them by a cry of joy and not of agony, how great was the happiness of the spirit who frees himself from his gross envelope to rise towards his Creator.

Men have interpreted these different signs according to their personal sensations. They have reflected on what would be their own feelings under similar circumstances, and have attributed the same sensations to Christ; for they saw only their material side, and believed him to possess a completely material body like their own. Jesus was a spirit, and therefore elevated above any physical and material sensations; but most men say, "What merit would it be for him to submit to such tortures, if he did not experience physical suffering?" But they do not understand that the spiritual suffering of the spiritual essence is much sharper

Digitized by Google

and severer than any of your human sufferings can be to your body. Jesus suffered cruelly indeed, not in his flesh, but in his spirit. Every stroke of the hammer upon the nails which transpierced his tangible fluidic hands and feet, wounded his sensibility, and made his soul shed its most precious blood; the blood of the love and devotion which he felt for you.

O carnal-minded men who can see nothing beyond the convulsions of the flesh, have you never had to endure moral sufferings, to which you would have preferred all the tortures of the Inquisition? Has it not sometimes happened to those among you who are parents to behold the child of your love repay your tenderness and devotion by the blackest ingratitude, by neglect, ill treatment, and even crime? And if you had the choice of exchanging your moral sufferings for physical torture, no matter how severe, would you not gladly do so? Even so did Jesus suffer deeply on the Cross.

There is no difficulty in explaining the disappearance of the body from the tomb. Jesus permitted his tangible perisprit to remain as it had been taken down from the cross, and laid there by Joseph of Arimathea. It was in the tomb when the chief priests and Pharisees visited it, and after satisfying themselves of the presence of the body, sealed the tomb, and stationed guards over it; but after this, the tomb was empty. Jesus caused the body to lose its tangibility, and resume its ethereal fluidic appearance, which was invisible to human eyes, and quitted the tomb. You know that there are no bars or obstacles to the spirit; and while his free, pure spirit ascended into space, the elements of the fluidic body which was the instrument of his earthly mission, remained ready to reunite at his will, to represent him as "risen from the dead" to the eyes of men. It reappeared, under circumstances and conditions which we will explain hereafter, until the period which is called the "Ascension," when his earthly mission was completed, and he finally abandoned the perispritic body which he had employed, and its constituent elements returned to the

Digitized by Google

several sources from whence they had been derived. He himself returned, a pure and perfect spirit, to the higher regions, to continue his spiritual mission as the protector and ruler of your planet. He is now accomplishing this mission among you by the Spirit of Truth, and by the New Revelation.

(Matth. xvi. 22, 23; Mark viii. 32, 33).—We must now explain the words spoken by Peter to Jesus when he predicted his sufferings, death, and resurrection; and the answer of Jesus. Peter was not always under medianimic influence, any more than your modern mediums, and his spirit acted independently, like yours. It was therefore the humanity of Peter which was moved with fear at the thought of losing his beloved Master. He was at this moment left to his own impulses, as was frequently the case; for the influence of the superior spirits who guided him was not always exerted. Was this not necessary to give scope for his free will, and can you imagine that his denial was caused by the inspiration of good spirits?

You should notice that he was left to himself while Jesus was near him to lead him back from his wanderings, and to teach him to distrust the weakness of the flesh. His human mission had not yet begun; he was like a pupil trying his powers under the eyes of his master, and not always able to use them perfectly; but as soon as the mission of Christ was ended on earth, that of Peter and the other disciples began. Then, too, began the incessant watchfulness of the superior spirits who were commissioned to guide them as far as was necessary.

As regards the severe reply of Jesus, every incarnate spirit is necessarily fallible, and Jesus desired to put Peter on his guard against the human weakness which always results in choosing the things of men in preference to those of God. The expression *Satan* which he applied to Peter was purely figurative, and only meant evil influence. Peter sought to turn his Master aside from his duty; and thus personified evil inspiration. In replying to Peter, Jesus thought of both the present and the future. He wished to remind all who

Digitized by Google

should hear his words, that the will of the Lord is above every other consideration, and that we must all, whether incarnate or not, bow with reverence, love, and submission before his holy laws. Therefore beware of human weaknesses, and may you all unite in holy communion of thought. Confess yourselves sincerely to one another; that is, exhort each other, that you may be mutually strengthened and enlightened, acknowledging your weaknesses, and examining into your most secret thoughts. Be ye therefore meek and humble of heart, with that engaging gentleness which leads the offender to seek for pardon. Be ye humble-minded with that deep and earnest humility which humbles itself in presence of its brethren, and loves to receive advice from whatever quarter it comes, never esteeming itself above others on account of gold, social position, intelligence, or virtues, but on the contrary seeks rather to hide its worth from the eyes of others, that it may not alarm or offend them. Be ye submissive to the will of your Father, with that grateful submission which joyfully receives the experiences which he sends you, whatever they may be. Be ye as patient as Job, and even more so; never allow a murmur to shape itself in the depths of your heart, and let your lips and soul be always ready to bless the Lord in all his dispensations. O men, whosoever you are, and you especially who have received the blessed light of Spiritism, never weep, except for gratitude. Such are the only tears which Faith should shed. Go in peace, explore your hearts, and let their inmost depths be always laid open before the Lord.

§ 191. Did Jesus, in replying to Peter, allude in thought to those who should undertake to continue the work of the disciples, but who have misrepresented the object of the sublime morality of the Master, and did he also allude to the present opponents of the New Revelation?

Yes, you are aware that Jesus possessed prescience of the various phases and conditions of future progress; and all his sayings bore reference both to the present and the future.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 24–28.
MARK, CHAP. VIII.—VERSES 34–38; IX. 1.
LUKE, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 23–27.

The Kingdom of God.

Matth. xvi. (24) Then Jesus said to his disciples, If any one wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (25) For whoever wishes to save his life, shall lose it, and whoever shall lose his life on account of me, shall find it. (26) For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own life; and what exchange shall a man give for his life? (27) For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then will he render to each according to his works. (28) Verily, I say unto you, There are some standing here who shall not experience death, until they shall see the Son of Man coming into his kingdom.

Mark viii. (34) And calling to him the crowd with his disciples, he said to them, Whosoever wishes to follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (35) For whoever wishes to save his life, shall lose it, and whoever shall lose his life on account of me and of the Gospel, he shall save it. (36) For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his life? (37) Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? (38) For whoever shall be ashamed of me and of my sayings in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall also the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. (ix. 1) And he said to them, Verily I say unto you, There are some standing here who shall not taste death until they shall see the kingdom of God come with power.

Luke ix. (23) And he said to them all, If any man wishes to follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross day by day, and follow me. (24) For whosoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, and whoever shall lose his life on account of me, this man shall save it. (25) For what shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, and he himself should be destroyed or injured? (26) For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall come in the glory of himself and his Father and the holy angels. (27) And I tell you truly, There are some standing here who shall not experience death until they shall see the kingdom of God.

§ 192. You can understand this, for you are aware that absolute devotion and unreserved submission are the only conditions which can lead you to the relative perfection which humanity is able to attain. Jesus does not insist too strongly on this subject, and you should never lose sight of it.

As regards the promise which he made to his disciples, affirming that that generation would not pass away until

Digitized by Google

they had seen these things, and that some would not die until then, it is necessary for you to know in what sense his words should be understood. How do the professors of Theology interpret them? Are they figurative; and if so, what are they intended to indicate?

Are they to be understood literally? If so, how can you show that the words of Jesus were true, and that they were fulfilled?

You who accept the revelation of the Spirit of Truth may understand these words in the true sense which is spiritually revealed to you. They apply to the race of spirits who were incarnate at that period, and who would remain on earth, by successive reincarnations, until the time when the kingdom of God shall be really established on earth, and the Son of Man shall appear in his glory to men whose eyes have become pure enough to endure his spiritual radiance. The expression, "They shall not taste of death," was used to render the subject intelligible to those to whom he spoke, who could not understand the law of re-birth in its full extent; but most of the spirits of whom Jesus spoke will then be purified, and reincarnated in earth on missions.

The Master's expressions were veiled by the letter, and were thus rendered appropriate to the age and to the intelligence of those whom he desired to impress. When man abandons himself wholly to material pleasures, he sinks into the state of those who lose their life for the goods of this world, or who "sell their soul to the demon," a phrase which is used so often without being properly understood. It is not necessary to sign a compact in blood with "the angel of darkness" (that is, with the evil spirits); and thus to lose your soul, but only to give yourself up to the material instincts of humanity more than is needful; for by so doing you degrade yourselves below the level of the brutes which you despise, and which, being guided by an instinct which you also possess, never exceed the limits fixed for them by the necessities of their existence.

Man is not his own master. His corporeal human existence is a trust which he receives from the Lord, and is the

Digitized by Google

appointed means granted him to purify himself, and to rise more rapidly. Man should not be more attached to his body than to a treasure which he has amassed with great labour; for neither the one nor the other will accompany him to the other world, or be of use to him there, although on this earth of trials both are a means of proving him, and of giving him the opportunity of fulfilling his obligations towards God by gratitude, towards his friends by charity, and towards himself by disinterestedness and the good use which he can make of them. But you ought not to be exclusively and personally attached either to your body or to your treasure. Use both as a means of being useful to your brethren; strive to do everything for their good, without any selfish thought of the trouble and inconvenience which may be caused to yourself by the labours which your body enables you to perform for the good of your brethren, any more than you should consider the privations to which you may be subjected when you use your money for their benefit. But yet you should not use either extravagantly, but wisely; and everything in the course of your life should be regulated by the great control of a reason enlightened by the torch of love and truth. If you consult your reason seriously, it will always point you to the straight, safe, and sure path.

You should consider that it will avail a man nothing to make all the sacrifices in the world, if his life is not conformable to the will of God. What will it avail a man to submit to all the privations and penances imposed by a deceptive ritual, with his own personal benefit in view, if he is wanting in charity towards his brethren and in gratitude towards his God? if selfishness alone has urged him to save his soul, and if his object is not to please God with the efforts which he makes to act rightly? When he is influenced by such selfishness, does he not resemble a child who has been promised a reward if he learns his lessons well, and who applies himself to them with all his might, taking neither rest nor refreshment till he lays his hand on the promised reward, but who would disregard the love and

Digitized by Google

satisfaction of his father, and sink again into idleness or indifference if there was no prize, or if he was doubtful of obtaining it?

O men, take no thought for your body beyond what is necessary, neither regard your souls from a selfish point of view, but regard your bodies as instruments which you should care for, in order that they may longer serve the necessities of the common cause, and let your object under all circumstances be the common good of your brethren, both in material, moral, and intellectual order, that you may please your God.

Never ask yourselves what progress you have made towards eternal happiness, but ask rather what joy you may have given to the tender Father who watches over all your thoughts and actions, and who rejoices to see the growth of the seeds of truth and love which he has implanted in you. O let all your thoughts and actions be guided by gratitude towards your God and by love towards your brethren, but never permit any feeling of selfishness or personal interest to stain the purity of your consciences.

(Mark viii. 38; Matth. xvi. 27).—These words of the Master relate to the past, the present, and the future. They refer especially to those who have known the truth, but have suppressed or hidden their convictions from regard to men. We do not now blame men whose social position compels them unwillingly to hide their secret thoughts for a time. They also ought to disseminate the truth, but with prudence and moderation, for they would often compromise the success of their enterprise by compromising their material existence. We speak rather of those who fear ridicule and who dare not offend the prejudices of their companions, and conform to them, laughing and mocking with the scorners, fearing lest it should be said, "You are also one of them." But Jesus will turn to them as he turned to Peter, and when they understand, the mischief will be done, and expiation will follow. Just as Peter perceived his errors and wept, so will those who have rejected Jesus from fear of man understand and expiate their error, for in their case it will

Digitized by Google

not be a temporary weakness of the flesh, but a prolonged act of the will; and the expiation will be proportioned to the duration of their fault.

Those who have been ashamed of Jesus, from his appearance on earth till your own days, he also has been ashamed of. They have first expiated their offences and have then been allowed to reincarnate themselves, and have thus formed part of the generations of spirits who have succeeded each other on your earth. The darnel must continue to grow on earth, that it may endeavour to become good corn by reincarnation, reparation, and progress.

In your days also the fear of men will continue to exist and to produce the same effects, and men will expiate the same offence, but they will not die, for they will still be allowed to reincarnate themselves on earth, and the darnel will still continue to grow by the side of the good corn.

Jesus will still be ashamed of those who are ashamed of him, until the separation of the darnel from the good corn shall be finished. After this, he will come into his kingdom in his own glory and in that of his Father and of the holy angels, who are the spirits who will then surround him, and who aided him in his mission and laboured at the progress of your planet, upon which the Kingdom of God will then be established with power. Then, too, all those spirits who have remained guilty and rebellious until that time will be dead to your planet, for they will no longer be permitted to reincarnate themselves upon it, but will be banished to the inferior planets, where their expiation will be proportioned to their fault, as is necessary for their moral improvement and progress.

Then, too, Jesus will render to each according to his works. You will be purified, and will have progressed, but you will not all have arrived at the same point of perfection. Otherwise what would be the use of judgment, the separation of the darnel from the good corn for expiation, or the preliminary purification?

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 1–9. MARK, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 2–10. LUKE, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 28–36.

Transfiguration of Jesus.

Matth. xvii. (1) And after six days, Jesus takes Peter and James and John his brother, and brings them up into a high mountain, alone. (2) And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments were radiant as light. (3) And lo, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him, (4) And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, let us pitch three tents here, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. (5) While he was still speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and lo, a voice from the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. (6) And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and feared exceedingly. (7) And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Rise up, and fear not. (8) And when they raised their eyes they saw no one, save Jesus only. (9) And while they were descending the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, Tell no one the vision till the Son of Man is risen from the dead.

Mark ix. (2) And after six days, Jesus takes Peter and James and John, and takes them up into a high mountain by themselves alone, and he was transfigured before them. (3) And his garments became shining, white exceedingly, like snow, such as no fuller on earth could whiten them. (4) And there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, and they were conversing with Jesus. (5) And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here, and we will pitch three tents, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. (6) For he knew not what to say, for they were affrighted. (7) And there was a cloud overshadowing them, and a voice came from the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son; hear ye him. (8) And looking round suddenly, they saw no one, but Jesus alone with themselves. (9) And as they were descending the mountain, he commanded them not to tell any one what they had seen, until the Son of Man should have arisen from the dead. (10) And they kept the saying to themselves, inquiring what the rising from the dead might be.

Luke ix. (28) And it was about eight days after these sayings that he took Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray. (29) And it came to pass that while he was praying, the appearance of his face became altered, and his clothing became brilliant. (30) And behold two men were conversing with him, who were Moses and Elijah, (31) Who appeared in glory, and spoke of his departure, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. (32) And Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; but having awakened, they saw his glory and the two men who were standing with him. (33) And it came to pass that as they were departing from him, Peter said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here, and we will pitch three tents, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah; not knowing what he said. (34) And while he was thus speaking, a cloud came and overshadowed them and they feared as they entered into the cloud. (35) And a voice came

Digitized by Google

from the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son; hear ye him. (36) And when the voice came, they found Jesus alone; and they kept silence, and told no one in those days of what they had seen.

§ 192. When Jesus said to his disciples, "And whom say ye that I am?" Peter, who had been for some time under the influence of medianimic inspiration, replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" and Jesus responded, "It is not you that speak, but my Father who speaketh in you."

The vision which Peter and James and John beheld on the mountain was a powerful spirit-manifestation, designed to display the spiritual elevation of Jesus, to confirm his mission as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and to give promises of the future, under a veil which was afterwards to be raised by the New Revelation. When Jesus reassumed for a moment the attributes of his nature in the eyes of his disciples (although veiled, since otherwise they would not have been able to endure the splendour) he gave them some idea of his own elevation, and of the glory of the life to which they aspired.

The presence of Moses and Elijah in a form visible to the disciples was designed to impress their imagination, and to confirm the spiritual elevation of Christ as the promised Messiah. Moses and Elijah had both foretold the coming of the Messiah, and their presence brought the mission of Jesus before the eyes of his disciples in all its sanctity. The words spoken from the cloud affirmed, in the name of the Omnipotent Father, the mission of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the promised Messiah. With reference to the future (that is, to your present age, which inaugurates the new era of the Christianity of Christ), the presence of Moses and Elijah sanctifies the intervention of spirits in human affairs. Jesus promised that his law should extend over the whole earth, and that all men should be gathered together under the flag which his disciples should unfurl. They could understand that the length of human life was quite insufficient for the completion of the task; and the presence of Moses and Elijah, who had also

Digitized by Google

laboured for the regeneration of humanity, taught the Apostles how they might continue the work which they had undertaken.

Jesus likewise included in himself the promises of the future. Just as Moses and Elijah had promised the Messiah, so did Jesus promise another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, by the intervention of the spirits of the Lord in human affairs, which was rendered lawful to all by the presence of Moses and Elijah on the mountain. They appeared to the disciples conversing with the transfigured Jesus, to show men the glory for which the Spiritual Revelation should prepare the way.

The three Evangelists related the same events under medianimic influence. The narratives reflect the human impressions, ideas, and interpretations of the three disciples, each of whom related his own sensations; and therefore each of the Evangelists recorded what he had been told.

Peter, James, and John kept the event secret, as Jesus had commanded, till after the close of the earthly mission of the Master. Their narratives were subsequently revealed and promulgated, and reflected the sensations and ideas of each of the witnesses. When the three narratives are collated, they reproduce the events as the disciples beheld and understood them.

We will explain the events in order, according to spiritual science.

(Matth. xvii. 1.)—Jesus chose Peter and James and John, because their physical constitution was best fitted to receive the spirit-manifestation which was about to take place. God never leaves anything to "chance;" and everything relating to the earthly mission of the Master was foreseen and prepared for. It was part of the mission of Peter and James and John to witness the events which took place on the mountain; and they were incarnated under conditions which fitted them for everything which was to take place during their mission.

(Luke ix. 32.)—The Apostles were not in a state of ordinary natural sleep, but in a state of drowsiness, such as

Digitized by Google

mediums experience at the time of a powerful manifestation. They were surrounded by fluids emanating from the spirits who were preparing to open their eyes. Peter alone was naturally clairvoyant; and the two others were less developed, and needed to be prepared by magnetico-spiritual influence, to behold the manifestation with the eyes of their spirit. This portion of the narrative was derived from the account which James and John gave of their own sensations, and which was related by the Evangelist according to what he had been told. When they awoke, their spiritual sight was opened, and they were enabled to see the spirits of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, who immediately became visible to them, and the manifestation took place.

(Matth. xvii. 2; Mark ix. 3.)—The Apostles were ignorant of the causes and effects of what they witnessed; and Jesus resembled a man who casts aside the cloak in which he is muffled; for he laid aside for the time the bodily human envelope in which they usually beheld him, as well as the human garments which covered it. Jesus caused these to become invisible to men, whenever he returned to the superior regions, and it would have been equally easy for him to cause his perispritic body to become intangible, and then to attract to it the fluids necessary to cause it to appear to the three disciples under the form which he desired them to behold, and afterwards to resume his human appearance and dress, while the cloud covered the disciples, who had fallen on their faces when Moses and Elijah appeared to them. But nothing takes place without a purpose; and what would have been the object and necessity for all this?

In order to effect his transfiguration, Jesus drew to himself, by the action of his powerful will, the fluids necessary to produce the effects. He enveloped his tangible perisprit and human dress in these fluids, which took the form and appearance which he desired his disciples to behold. But you should understand that when Jesus transfigured himself before the disciples, he placed himself within their comprehension. His tangible perisprit, which appeared to them like a human body, disappeared from their

Digitized by Google

eyes; and it was as if he had laid aside one dress to put on another. Jesus wore clothes which could not dissolve and become fluidically luminous, like a tangible perisprit; but he surrounded them with luminous fluids which would not dazzle the human eyes of the disciples, and yet gave them some idea of the glory to which they aspired.

The face of Jesus appeared to them to shine like the sun; but only in its radiance. They could not bear the lustre, and therefore compared it to the light of the sun, which compels you to lower your eyes; but Jesus did not appear in the full radiance of his spiritual splendour. He was, as it were, robed in fluids which were luminous to human eyes, but very dim as compared to himself. The brilliant radiance and snow-like whiteness which the garments of Jesus assumed was caused by the fluids which enveloped them. It was a fluidic compound which took the appearance of the robes in which all spirits who assume a bodily appearance are clothed.

Jesus partially resumed the attributes of his real nature to the eyes of his disciples. Do you not know that the greater the elevation of any spirit, the more luminous it appears to human eyes? There is nothing more remarkable to us or to any elevated spirits in this luminous emanation than you behold in a more or less beautiful form or figure. It merely enables us to judge of the elevation of the spirits around us, just as the complexion of a man enables you to perceive whether he was born amid the snows of the north, or amid the sands of the desert. The higher the spirit, the lighter, whiter, and brighter do these emanations become.

The conditions and planetary progress of the worlds always correspond with the state of the spirits who inhabit them. There are so many degrees among both the material and spiritual worlds that they cannot be classified, for the material worlds gradually pass from the material to the fluidic state; and the spiritual worlds also pass from the fluidic state to one yet more purely fluidic.

The purer the worlds become, the more colourless becomes the light around them by insensible gradations. It passes

Digitized by Google

from red to blue and white by intermediate gradations of colours which you can understand by looking at an artist's palette.* Do you not behold flames which are fed by a material substance assume various shades of colour, and appear as it were material, while those fed by a gas are lighter and whiter? It follows naturally that the more elevated the planet, the whiter and brighter is its light. Those spiritual worlds, which you call celestial, which have arrived at a purely fluidic condition, and which are inhabited solely by good spirits, are those which radiate the whitest and brightest light in the hierarchy of worlds. There is also a hierarchy among the pure spirits who are equal in purity as regards their moral perfection (compare § 60), with reference to universal knowledge. All are drawing nearer to God throughout eternity, but without ever being able to equal Him, the Eternal and Infinite, who is so ethereal, and so resplendent and dazzling with whiteness and light that none among the most elevated of the pure spirits can look upon him or endure his lustre, when he approaches the Fire of Omnipotence to receive the inspiration of the will of the Sovereign Master, the Father of all which exists.

The rainbow which God pointed out to the Hebrews through Moses as the emblem of the perpetual compact between God and all the creatures living upon earth, is, spiritually interpreted, the emblem of the progress of all worlds and of all spiritual essences, in friendship and union, in all the kingdoms of nature, whether material or incarnated in a material or fluidic state, or perispritically incorporated, or errant throughout space. It likewise symbolizes the uniform and ascending course of all the worlds and of all the spiritual essences of every degree. You must not forget that the Hebrews regarded the earth as the whole of Creation, the heavens and the firmament being only a necessary adjunct.

The phenomenon of the transfiguration of Jesus was not so great a prodigy as you imagine, as a physical effect. Have

* The suns and planets are of different colours.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

we not already told you that he did not appear in all his glory, but was robed in fluids which were luminous to men, but very dark as regarded himself? This faculty belongs to all the elevated spirits, who can produce these phenomena under conditions corresponding to their degree of elevation. We and all others of our class can attain the same end when it is necessary and permitted. We can render ourselves first visible and tangible in a human form, and can then transfigure ourselves by gathering round us the needful luminous fluids, rendered visible to the eyes of men; but these fluids are always inferior to those corresponding to our spiritual elevation. You know that the phenomenon of transfiguration can also be accomplished in humanity; but this transfiguration has no resemblance to that accomplished by Jesus or by other elevated spirits. We shall give you further explanations presently.

(Luke ix. 31.)—Moses and Elijah became visible to the Apostles in glory, because, though presenting a human appearance, they were luminous, like the superior spirits. The disciples required no inspiration to recognize Moses and Elijah, like that received by Peter when he answered the question of Jesus, "Whom say ye that I am?"

They saw them, and that was sufficient; Moses appeared with the sign which he showed to the Hebrews, the two flames on the head, recorded by tradition, and the Apostles recognized him by this sign. You will remember the tradition that when Elijah was taken up to heaven, he left his mantle with Elisha, his disciple and his successor in Israel. But you do not know that the Jews never appeared in public on a solemn occasion or in the holy place without being covered with their mantle, and Elijah appeared by the side of Moses without a mantle. They understood this; for, as you know, Peter and his companions were advanced spirits, whose intelligence, though obscured by the flesh, sometimes dominated over it.

(Luke ix. 31.)—The conversation and its subject were a human idea founded on comments relative to the presence of Moses and Elijah, who appeared to be conversing with

Digitized by Google

Jesus; and also on the words of Jesus, "Until the Son of Man shall have risen from the dead." The Evangelists were medianimically inspired to record what they had heard from the three disciples, each of whom related his own sensations; and according to the account which reached Luke, Moses and Elijah appeared in glory, and Jesus received the needful instructions from them. Jesus, who foresaw the future, had already predicted his coming to Jerusalem, and his death and resurrection; and there was no occasion for Moses and Elijah to inform him of it. After the manifestation was over, the disciples were still so confused that they asked each other what Jesus meant by saying, "Till the Son of Man shall have risen from the dead."

There was nothing extraordinary in the appearance of Moses and Elijah. They and many other more elevated spirits were always near the Master, and awaiting his commands, as they are still, though invisible to human eyes. They alone made themselves visible because they had both predicted the Messiah, and their presence only was necessary in accordance with the traditions of the Hebrews, to accomplish the object of the manifestation. As they were departing, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us pitch three tents, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah; not knowing what he said, for they were afraid." Peter's proposal to pitch three tents likewise arose from Hebrew errors. Peter thought he saw Moses and Elijah raised from the dead in fleshly bodies, and wished them to remain near his beloved Master. He was confused; and you may suppose that this manifestation did not last very long. It appeared to the disciples that Moses and Elijah were going away, when Peter proposed to pitch the tents. They received this impression, owing to their error in supposing that they appeared in fleshly bodies; being ignorant of spiritual phenomena. Moses and Elijah did not actually depart, but they began to disappear from the eyes of the Apostles, whose power of beholding them was lessened. They became invisible; but

Digitized by Google

it appeared to the disciples as if they were lost in the distance.

(Matth. xvii. 5–8; Luke ix. 34, 35.)—The luminous cloud which covered the disciples was only the surrounding fluids, which became visible to them. We have already explained this in speaking of the light which surrounded the shepherds. When Jesus touched the disciples, and said, "Rise up, and fear not," Moses and Elijah had already become invisible to their eyes. Peter, James and John were released from the medianimic influence, and returned to corporeal human life; upon which they saw no one but Jesus, who had caused the phenomena to cease, by dispelling the fluids which he had attracted, and which had now become colourless and invisible to human eyes. He was then alone, as he had been when he had ascended the mountain with them; for he returned to the ordinary human appearance which he always assumed when his visible presence among men was necessary for the requirements of his mission.

(Mark ix. 8, 9.)—Do not be surprised that the Apostles asked each other what Jesus meant by saying, "Till the Son of Man has risen from the dead." They did not understand it; the doctrine of Reincarnation had become a superstition, though they still believed it. They could understand that a soul might inhabit a new body after centuries had passed, as the soul of the prophet Elijah had come to animate the body of John the Baptist; but they could not understand how Jesus could immediately commence a new existence in the same body. They supposed that the reappearance of the soul must needs take place in matter; for on the one hand, Jesus appeared to them to be clothed with a body like their own, subject to human death, and which could only resume its existence by the return of the spirit into the corpse; which was what they understood by the word "resurrection;" and on the other hand, they knew nothing of the perispritic nature of the body of Jesus, or of the possible combinations and tangibility of the perisprit.

Jesus forbade his disciples to speak to anyone of what had happened, until he had arisen from the dead, because

Digitized by Google

if they had done so before that event, they would not have been believed; and because their testimony as to what they had seen on the mountain, would afterwards be accepted by those who had come to look upon Jesus as a man clothed with a material human body, mortal and perishable like their own; and also as the Son of God miraculously incarnated.

We must now explain the phenomenon of the transfiguration of a human being; but you must remember that this has nothing to do with the transfiguration of Jesus, or of the superior spirits. Man alone cannot produce this phenomenon, but needs the aid of his brethren in the errant state. It can take place either with or without his will and knowledge. When it is produced by the voluntary action of the incarnate spirit, his will summons those whose aid he needs. He has no need to evoke them, for his desire to transfigure himself is sufficient to attract sympathetic spirits, if a sufficiently important object is to be attained. When the phenomenon takes place without the will or knowledge of the incarnate spirit, he is only an instrument in the hands of the spirits who produce it. He is often their unconscious instrument, especially if he knows nothing of spiritual science, or of the causes and effects of such a phenomenon.

Transfiguration is generally effected by the mutual action of the subject and of the spirits, which results in a blending of their perisprits and a combination of their fluids. The operating spirit mingles his perisprit with that of the subject, and enveloping him with their combined fluids, gives him the appearance which he desires him to assume. The subject is surrounded with fluids which he can neither see nor feel, which cause him to assume the appearance which he is to present to the eyes of the beholders. The fluids conceal the presence of the subject, and you see only what the spirits desire to show you.

We have said that the subject neither sees nor feels the fluids. In this case, some of the incarnate spirits who are subjected to the influences which produce the phenomenon are in a condition analogous to the magnetic or somnambulic state. Others who are mediums feel the influence

Digitized by Google

which compels them to turn their eyes in one direction or the other, without being aware of the change in their appearance, feeling that they are acting independently of their own will and faculties, but without perceiving the agency which envelopes them and effects their transformation, any more than the psychographic medium who feels a slight influence move his arm perceives the form which moves it, unless he is a seeing medium; and even then he perceives nothing unless the spirit desires to render himself visible to him.

This appearance is visible and tangible to the bystanders, but not to the subject, unless he perceives it accidentally. If he is brought before a mirror, he can see it with his own eyes; but such experiments are of little use. The spirit who effects the phenomenon of transfiguration can not only render all the appearances which he desires to show visible and tangible, but can also give his subject the features, air, tone of voice, and even the turns of expression of the person whose corporeal appearance he thus reproduces. The spirit avails himself of the aspect, voice, and limbs of the incarnate spirit who serves him as his instrument, to speak or act in whatever manner he requires; and, if necessary, the spirits combine their efforts to attain the desired end; but it is requisite that the subject should be predisposed to various forms of mediumship, which is rare, especially at the present day; but in future, these faculties will be better developed in men. In such a case, the illusion is so complete that the bystanders believe they really see and hear the person whom the transfiguration is designed to simulate. The operating spirit can also, if necessary (with the concurrence of other spirits, and by availing himself of the needful conditions) cause his subject to assume the form and appearance of a dead person, with all his peculiarities, so that the bystanders believe they see the man himself before them.

Whatever appearance is given to the transfigured subject (whether that of a larger or stouter person, or that of a young child), his natural weight appears to you to remain

Digitized by Google

the same, *provided* that there is no concurrence of spirits, and that the appearance only is changed. It is only by the concurrence of spirits that the weight varies more or less.* If the change is only apparent, the amount of the matter of the body is neither increased nor diminished. Increase or diminution of the natural weight can only take place by the addition of the perisprit of the spirit or spirits who communicate, or of the fluids which surround the subject, and effect his transfiguration. But the fluids by which we act, though ponderable to us, are imponderable to you at present; they are as imponderable to you as the air was to your ancestors before they had invented the needful instruments to weigh it. The air was always of the same density; but your ancestors could not weigh it, and supposed it to be an essence without weight or bulk. It is the same with you at present, as regards the fluids by which we effect transfiguration.

The universal fluid is a compound of various fluids forming but one in the mass; but we draw from it such portions as we require. It takes the desired direction, or connects itself with the whole, according to circumstances. The various fluids are ponderable to us in the universal fluid, and in those which result from subtractions or combinations effected by spirit-agency. Everything is ponderable in nature, which is a general term for all the organic and inorganic creations, both from a fluidic and material point of view.

The various fluids, of which the universal fluid is composed, will only be recognised as ponderable (like the air, which you can now weigh), by means of instruments and methods which will long remain unknown. But you will finally succeed in this, and what you now regard as great mysteries will become plain when you understand the nature and properties of the fluids around you. But, for this purpose, man must learn to raise himself into aerial

* I believe this passage was published before any experiments in weighing mediums in cases of so-called "materialization" had been attempted.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

regions, which are still as unknown to him as are distant seas to the peasant who has never left his hut.

Moral purification and intellectual progress will both assist you to ascend, for the former will attract more powerful aid; and you will be better able to understand, without abusing your knowledge, which will then become easy to you, and you will learn more, and raise yourselves more speedily.

It is only by the agency of spirits that the natural weight of the subject can be increased or diminished. This phenomenon is the result of the united spiritual and fluidic action of several spirits, for it cannot be effected by one alone. To increase or diminish the weight of a transfigured subject, the spirits around employ the same means by which they can fix a light table to the ground, or lift a considerable weight like a feather. When they give the subject the appearance of a larger and heavier person, they increase the density of the fluids, when necessary, to the point required to produce the difference between the weight of the person represented, and that of the subject. But when they give a tall and stout person the appearance of a little child, they diminish his weight by upholding the transfigured subject, until his weight is proportioned to his size. In this case, the moment that there is any spiritual action, the weight varies in conformity with the appearance, provided that it is necessary; for you can understand that, if necessary, the spirits could increase the weight, when a tall robust man took the appearance of a young child, or could diminish it when a young child took the appearance of a tall, strong man.

To effect such transfigurations, the operating spirit cannot act alone, if he is but little elevated; if, for instance, he is of your own level, or not much above you. Spirits avail themselves of the elements of medianimity which they meet with, just as the combination of analogous perisprits is necessary to produce noises, and other physical effects; and the subject must likewise possess the physical aptitudes necessary for transfiguration, and for the effects which are to be produced. It is impossible for you to understand

Digitized by Google

these subjects at present, for they relate to the combinations of perispritic fluids, and belong to a class of ideas still far above you. The time has not yet come for you to enter upon this study. Except as regards the concurrence of the perisprit, the spirit is the sole agent, as you may perceive.

When more elevated spirits desire to transfigure a human being, they can dispense with his physical susceptibility, although they prefer suitable conditions. When the incarnate spirit does not possess the necessary physical susceptibility, we envelop him with fluids which form, as it were, a covering which we throw over him to give him the appearance which we desire. We can thus, by means of luminous fluids rendered visible to men, present the subject under a luminous form. We can change his appearance, and present him to their eyes in such a form as may be required to impress their imaginations. Thus, incarnate spirits may be raised, as transfigured subjects, not to so elevated a point as that which Jesus assumed before the eyes of the disciples, but to a state resembling it, if their moral and physical dispositions are suitable. If it is necessary to produce a striking effect upon the imagination, we can even employ an unworthy subject who possesses the physical susceptibility required; just as you use an imperfect tool till you find a good one, in which case you prefer to employ that which is most useful. Even so, we abandon the instrument which only possesses material qualities (that is, physical susceptibilities) when we meet with a good instrument possessing both the necessary physical and moral dispositions. We are always ready to endeavour to remedy what is physically wanting in an incarnate spirit who fulfils the desired moral conditions; but how few are there among you who possess faith, elevation of mind, self-renunciation, and charity, to a sufficient extent to attract us to you thus! Such cases of transfiguration are still more uncommon than those produced by spirits of your own level, or a little above you; and even these latter are themselves very rare indeed.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 10–13. MARK, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 11–13.

The Spirit of Elijah reincarnated as John the Baptist.

Matth. xvii. (10) And the disciples asked him, saying, Wherefore say the Scribes that Elijah must first come? (11) And Jesus answered and said to them, Elijah indeed cometh first, and shall restore all things; (12) But I say unto you that Elijah has come already, and they have not recognized him, but have done unto him whatsoever they desired; and thus must the Son of Man suffer at their hands. (13) Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist.

Mark ix. (11) And they asked him, saying, Why say the Scribes that Elijah must first come? (12) And he answered and said to them, Elijah indeed cometh first, and shall restore all things; and how it is written of the Son of Man that he shall suffer many things, and be set at nought. (13) But I say unto you that Elijah has indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they desired, as it was written of him.

§ 193. You should understand the object of these words of Jesus. By directing the attention of his disciples to the return of Elijah in the person of John the Baptist, Jesus laid the foundation of the spiritual revelation of the law of reincarnation which he was about to make, under a veil, in his interview with Nicodemus; and which was to be fully unfolded to men at the appointed time. This was the corner-stone which Jesus carved to support the building of the future.

Although the Master's words were of but little importance to the Apostles, and to succeeding generations until your own age, under the dominion of the letter, they will exert a great influence in future under the dominion of the Spirit. For the present, they only served to confirm the prophecies in the ancient books. The Apostles had no need to lay stress upon reincarnation. Although not part of the Hebrew Law, it was nevertheless believed by the majority. It is true that sceptics had already called it in question by ridiculing it, and treating it as a superstition, as they have always done, both before and after the time of Jesus. They have hidden the light under a bushel, lest its brightness should reveal to all what some would desire to conceal. Jesus revived this old belief by asserting that Elijah had risen again in the person of John the Baptist, and thus

Digitized by Google

proclaimed to all the natural and immutable law of rebirth, of which the reincarnation of Elijah was only an example and application among you of the general order of nature in the human kingdom.

Do not wonder that the disciples asked Jesus, "Wherefore say the Pharisees that Elijah must first come?" You must remember that all who were then disciples of Jesus, belonged to the lowest grades of society. Should you be surprised if one of your artisans who could not read, and knew nothing of the sacred writings but a few unmeaning words quoted in the Catechism, were to ask you such a question? Theological science was in those days what it is now; a light hidden under a bushel, lest the multitude should become sufficiently enlightened to perceive how fearfully the Scriptures have been perverted and disfigured by human interpretations. Jesus said that the Scribes and Pharisees had not recognized John. They did not understand that he who preached repentance and the advent of the Reformer was the Elijah promised in the Old Testament. The disciples understood that Jesus spoke to them of John, because his words fixed their attention upon the only man who appeared to them to fulfil the conditions of the promised Forerunner.

The tradition* appears, according to the letter, to contradict the words of Jesus, both as regards the return of Elijah to the earth, in the person of John the Baptist, as well as the incarnation of the spirit (or soul) of Elijah in the body of John. But when this tradition is explained in spirit and in truth, it confirms the words of the Master in every point.

Your reason and knowledge conflict with the letter, and know not how to seek for the spirit, and therefore reject what they cannot understand or explain. But the spirits of the Lord have come, in the name of the Spirit of Truth, to shed light on everything which remains obscure. According to the literal interpretation of the tradition, the bodily eyes of Elisha beheld Elijah carried away to heaven, incarnate and

* 2 Kings ii. 1–18.

Digitized by Google

living, in a chariot of fire. But how could Elijah be in heaven, where everything is eternally spiritual, if he was incarnated, and living a natural human life, subject to all the necessities of humanity? And even supposing this, how could his spirit (or soul) be reincarnated as John the Baptist?

Every thinking man at the present day feels that if this tradition was taken literally, it would stultify the words of Jesus, and lead to the most absurd and inadmissible consequences, both from a rational and scientific point of view. But the tradition does not represent the real facts as they actually took place. Both Elijah and Elisha were seeing, inspired, and hearing mediums, under spirit influence and action, according to the circumstances and necessities of their mission, and were thus instruments of the will of the Lord. Elijah was medianimically informed of the approaching termination of his earthly mission, and was inspired to take his disciple with him in order to prepare him for the revelation of which he was to be the instrument, and for his mission as a prophet among the Hebrews. But being ignorant of how far medianimity could be developed in Elisha, Elijah replied to his request that he might succeed him as the leader and shepherd of the flock of Israel: "If you see me, you shall receive what you ask," *i.e.* "If the medianimic faculty is developed in you, you shall see me when other men cannot, and this will be a sign that the Lord accepts you as my successor."

Lightning consumed the body of Elijah, and his spirit, clothed with the perisprit which assumed the form of the body from which it had been instantaneously separated, rose in space towards the higher regions, visible to the seeing medianimity of Elisha, and then disappeared; even as the smoke rising from the chimney of a factory or an engine, is first visible to you, and then fades away until it becomes quite invisible.

"And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven; and Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horses thereof. And he saw him no more."

Digitized by Google

Elisha received a medianimic vision under these conditions. The chariot and horses of fire represented the lightning which consumed the material body of Elijah, while his perispritic envelope rose up before his eyes of his attentive disciple. You know that the elements are a means which the spirits of the Lord frequently employ to accomplish events which his wisdom has decreed.

Do not wonder that the lightning appeared to the medianimic gaze of Elisha to present the appearance of a chariot and horses of fire. Does not lightning assume various forms, even to your own eyes? In this instance, Elisha saw what the spirits of the Lord desired him to see, because he was intended to believe that the chariot and horses of fire had carried away Elijah. You are aware that spirits can cause a medium to see what they desire by spiritual action on his brain, according to the appearances given to the fluidic combinations which are employed in medianimic vision. Nor should you be surprised that Elijah, who was an elevated spirit on a mission, should have perceived his condition at the very moment when his material body was consumed by lightning; and became visible to the medianimic gaze of Elisha under the human form from which he had just been separated. This cost him no effort; for you know that the perisprit preserves the impression and shape of the body which it has assumed, especially when it has just been separated from it. Under ordinary circumstances, this would have been simple medianimity on the part of Elisha; but even had it been otherwise, can you suppose that Elijah, an elevated spirit, prepared for his immediate separation from the body, would have needed time to recover himself? Do you not see that most of your brethren who are initiated into the New Revelation, recover their spiritual faculties almost instantaneously? The chariot and horses of fire appeared to Elisha to ascend like a whirlwind, or like a column of luminous vapours wreathing up like clouds driven by a storm.

Elisha, who lived in an age when the effects of lightning were unknown, had no idea of seeking for traces of the body

Digitized by Google

of Elijah, which moreover he would not have found. The attendant spirits turned his thoughts from any such intention by showing him Elijah ascending to heaven in a whirlwind. Thus, when the attendants asked to be allowed to go in search of his master, he answered, "Do not send;" but, nevertheless, they wished to search for him; and you are told that they did not find him. When they returned to Elisha, he said, "Did I did not tell you not to send?" The attendant spirits had concealed the traces of the body from all who sought for them. God, in his foresight and infinite wisdom, adapts events, actions, and revelations to the intelligence and requirements of every age and period, under the conditions required for the slow, but steady and always progressive, course of humanity.

The disciples understood from the answer of Jesus, that John the Baptist was Elijah, whom the prophets had announced as the Forerunner of Christ. Jesus could not then tell them, what we must now reveal to you, that Moses, Elijah, and John the Baptist were one and the same. We are commanded to reveal this, for the time has come when the "new alliance" must be accomplished, and when all men (Jews and Gentiles) must range themselves under the same faith: One God, single and indivisible, the uncreated and eternal Creator, who alone is eternal; the Father: Jesus Christ, your Protector, Ruler, and Master; the Son: and the Spirits of the Lord, pure, superior, and good spirits, who labour, under the direction of the Christ, at the progress of your planet and its humanity; the Holy Spirit.

Moses, Elijah, and John the Baptist are one and the same spirit, thrice incarnated on a mission; firstly, as Moses, whoprepared for the coming of Christ, and announced him under a veil; secondly, reincarnated as Elijah, who threw great lustre upon the Hebrew traditions, and was announced by the prophets as the precursor of the Christ; thirdly, reincarnated as John, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, to be the promised Forerunner. These three figures were the emblem of the triple mission which was accomplished at three different periods, and which was brought within

Digitized by Google

human comprehension by the appearance of Moses and Elijah on Mount Tabor.

Jesus taught men that John the Baptist was Elijah returned to your earth. He was the same spirit by reincarnation, but not the same human personality, or earthly individuality. Consequently, at the time of the transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor, a superior spirit of the same elevation as Elijah, or John, took the form and appearance of Moses. These substitutions are effected, when necessary, by spirits of the same order.

Reincarnation has long been forgotten. This was necessary, because a veil was needed between men who were filled with vices, follies, and superstitions; and the mysteries of the other world, until the progress of humanity rendered it able to grasp and comprehend these mysteries, which were to be revealed to men by the spirits of the Lord, who should thus open to their gaze the paths of expiation, reparation, and progress for the spirit, which will conduct it to moral perfection, and thus to the fulfilment of its destiny, according to the infinite justice, goodness, and mercy of God.

Jesus, in his interview with Nicodemus, purposely left the subject of Reincarnation in obscurity, until the New Revelation should show it, shining through all his teachings, under the veil of the letter. Everything in the course of events has its object. To what abuses might not the known and voluntary contact of spirits with your humanity have led! Even now, when your intelligence is more developed, and your minds are stronger and better instructed, look at the ridiculous practices of some, and the absurd confidence of others; and yet ought you not to be ripe, since the time of harvest is approaching?

Judge for yourselves, by the vagaries of so many Spiritists, what would have been the consequence in former times! It is true that spiritual influence likewise existed then, but under circumstances very different from those of to-day. The ignorant and guilty spirits of your earth, when in the spiritual (that is, the errant) state, were generally kept in ignorance of their power of communicating with men. Those

Digitized by Google

only who were comparatively elevated and disengaged from matter were able to employ this faculty of communication, which all now make use of, because you can and ought to understand its effects. We say "the inferior spirits were generally kept in ignorance," because there have been some, at all times and in all places, who have been the instruments of your trials and expiations. The spirits who were superior to your degree of elevation at that time influenced some men who were not so bad as the rest, to elevate them and guide the others. The Lord would not put a dangerous weapon in your hands, nor would he leave you defenceless. But you are now fitted to understand, and to keep yourselves on your guard. The child cannot touch dangerous weapons without wounding himself, but when he is a man he handles them, and learns their use.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 14–21. MARK, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 14–30. LUKE, CHAP. IX. VERSES 37–42; XVII. 5, 6.

The Lunatic—Prayer and Fasting.

Matth. xxvii. (14) And when they came to the multitude, a man came to him, kneeling to him, and saying, (15) Lord, pity my son, for he is lunatic, and suffers fearfully; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water. (16) And I brought him to thy disciples, and they were unable to cure him. (17) And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I tolerate you? Bring him here to me. (18) And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon went out of him, and the boy was healed from that hour. (19) Then the disciples of Jesus came to him privately, saying, Wherefore could we not cast him out? (20) And Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief; for verily I say unto you that if you had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you should say to this mountain, Henceforth remove from this place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you. (21) But this kind is not cast out except by prayer and fasting.

Mark ix. (14) And on coming to the disciples, they saw a large crowd round them, and Scribes disputing with them. 15) And immediately the whole multitude seeing him were amazed, and ran to him, and saluted him. (16) And he asked the Scribes, What are you disputing about with them? (17) And a man answered from the crowd, and said, Teacher, I brought my son to thee, who has a dumb spirit. (18) And when it seizes him, it rends him, and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth, and is parched up. And I asked thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not. (19) And he answered and said to him,

Digitized by Google

O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I tolerate you? Bring him to me. (20) And they brought him to him, and when he saw him, the spirit tore him, and he fell on the ground, and rolled about foaming. (21) And he asked his father, How long has it been thus with him? and he said, From a child. (22) And it has often cast him into the fire and into the waters, that it might destroy him; but if thou canst, aid us, and have compassion on us. (23) And Jesus said to him, If thou canst believe; for all things are possible to him who believeth. (24) And immediately the father of the boy cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief. (25) And Jesus seeing the multitude running together, rebuked the unpurified spirit, saying to him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee to come out of him, and not to enter into him again. (26) And having cried out, and rent him sore, it came out, and he was as if dead, so that many said that he was dead. (27) But Jesus took hold of his hand, and lifted him up, and he stood up. (28) And when he came into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Wherefore could we not cast him out? (29) And he said to them, This kind cannot be cast out, except by prayer and fasting. (30) And going forth from thence, they travelled through Galilee, and he did not wish that any one should know it.

Luke ix. (37) And it came to pass on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. (38) And behold a man cried out from the crowd, saying, Teacher, I pray thee look upon my son, who is my only child. (39) And behold a spirit seizes him, and suddenly he cries out and rends himself in madness, and it hardly departs from him, greatly injuring him. (40) And I besought thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not. (41) And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and tolerate you? Bring your son here to me. (42) And while he was coming to him, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. And Jesus rebuked the unpurified spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.

Luke xvii. (5) And the Apostles said to the Lord, Increase our faith. (6) And the Lord said, If you had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you should say to this mulberry-tree, Be thou rooted up, and planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

§ 194. These verses furnish one of the most striking illustrations of the mission and power of Jesus. Most of you pass over his words, "I say unto thee, come out of him;" and yet they contain the most positive revelation of the superiority of Christ.

You can, from a spiritual point of view, compare the event which is described to you with those which take place in your own days. You yourselves are poor deaf-mutes, like the child whom his father brought to Jesus; you are blind also; and your infirmities, caused by evil influences, lead you into all kinds of dangers, and are the cause of all your falls. The disciples of the Master are unable to deliver you,

Digitized by Google

because their faith is too weak, and because they do not fast and pray sufficiently, in the spiritual sense intended by Jesus. Moreover, although they are commissioned to drive away the "demons" who subjugate you, by freeing you from the passions and vices which would destroy you, there is nevertheless a sediment of these vices and passions in their own hearts, which they themselves must struggle against; and hence their exorcism is of the lips only. The "demon" ridicules their efforts, and continues his subjugation.

Let all among you who would deliver your brethren from the evil spirits who mislead them, act like Jesus. Fast and pray; but do not misunderstand the power of prayer, and the act of fasting. Prayer is not the lip-repetition of more or less harmonious, sonorous, and humble words, which are supposed to reach the Lord, O, you do not find sufficient support in your mouth to raise your words to God. It is in your hearts that the force exists which offers up the spiritual prayer of pure thoughts in an outburst of love and adoration, and elevates it by a single effort to the foot of the Eternal Throne. What signify the words, or even the thought? All that is needful is love and humility; these are the actions of your life which react upon your thoughts, and compose a perfect whole, worthy to approach the abode of perfection.

Fast; but fast spiritually. What are the substances which contribute to sustain your material organism, to the Lord? What does it matter to him at what time you satisfy your material necessities? This belongs to the organic law, with which the spirit ought to have nothing whatever in common. Fast, by abstaining from guilty, useless, and even frivolous thoughts; fast, by practising sobriety in satisfying your material necessities; fast by modesty, regular habits, and wise conduct. Fast by discovering how to impose on yourselves privations which do not injure your own frame, but which may have a salutary influence on your brother's. Fast by denying yourselves somewhat superfluous, above what you deem necessary, and offer it to your brother, who does

Digitized by Google

not possess what is indispensable to sustain the body; whether bread, or clothes, or shelter. Such, friends, is the kind of prayer and fasting which avails to cast out demons of the worst kind.

We have already given you sufficient explanations respecting the causes and effects of this subjugation. Jesus himself gave the disciples a clear and precise explanation of the causes which prevented them from driving away the evil and greatly suffering spirit who obsessed the child. Faith, a powerful lever which can move the world easier than any other, is the only means which you could employ with success; faith leads to prayer, and prayer, by its fervour and perseverance, aided by spiritual fasting, finally touches the guilty spirit, enlightens and redeems him. Jesus had no need to have recourse to prayer, because, being a pure and perfect spirit, invested with omnipotent power over the impure spirits, his apparently human life passed on piously before the Lord; and because his mission was an act of faith and love, an active and permanent prayer which uplifted him (even apart from his spiritual superiority) above all other spirits in force and persuasion.

Know well the power of prayer, and realize the powerful assistance which you can draw from it by attracting the guardian spirits of humanity to yourselves. Prayer is not a form of words repeated daily for a given end. Under such circumstances, it becomes sooner or later, mechanical. Efficacious prayer, like that of Jesus, consists of the actions of life, when they are unceasingly upheld by the thoughts of God, and continually referred to him. It is a continual elevation of thought, wherever you are, and whatever you are doing. It is an incessant aspiration towards the Creator, guiding you in the practical paths of truth, love, and charity, for your own intellectual and moral progress, and for that of your brethren; an aspiration which disengages you from humanity, and causes the spirit to rule over everything which is material.

We must now give you some special explanations.

(Mark ix. 14, 15.)—The people were awaiting the arrival

Digitized by Google

of Jesus to witness a new "miracle;" and the Scribes were casting ridiculous accusations on Jesus, and were expatiating on the failure of the disciples, and endeavouring to persuade the people not to await the return of the Master. On the arrival of Jesus, the masses were deeply impressed. The word amazed does not convey the idea. A feeling passed over them like that which causes the heart of man to beat when he feels that some great event is about to take place. It is an indefinable sensation which the Evangelists endeavoured to express by the word "amazed."

(Matth. xvii. 14; Mark ix. 17–21.)—When the child's father said first, "He is lunatic," and then added, "He is possessed by a dumb spirit," he expressed two opinions which he held on the subject; thus in his ardent desire for the cure, calling the Master's attention to everything on which he thought it might be useful to enlighten him. The Gospels contain various details of events which complete each other when brought together. The words of the father and the disciples were not spoken all at once; there was a discussion. If you remember this, you will not think it absurd when a succession of events and words are recorded concerning the same event, but which do not naturally spring from one another. When you speak long on the same subject, do you always employ the same words; and does not discussion lead to your regarding the facts from new points of view?

When the father brought the child to the disciples before the arrival of Jesus, they supposed that he suffered only from a disease which was termed lunacy, because the symptoms were attributed chiefly to the action of the phases of the moon. But, in truth, the child was under the influence of an obsessing spirit, who conformed with the idea of lunar influence (for the attacks occurred at regular intervals), lest the real causes of the evil should be suspected. The obsessing spirit had produced these attacks at periodical intervals by the power of his will since the infancy of his victim, and he knew his advantage in keeping up the belief in a material disease.

Digitized by Google

The father brought the child to the disciples, hoping for a material cure. There had been a discussion; and the efforts of the pupils of Jesus showed the father that the influence of the stars had nothing to do with the case, but that it was a case of possession, that is, in the present instance, subjugation. He therefore implored the disciples to deliver his son, who was possessed with a dumb spirit; or subjugated by a spirit who had deprived him of speech by his fluidic action. The father was influenced both by his previous ideas and by the discussion with the disciples, which had led him to suspect obsession, especially as they were unable to effect a cure; and consequently, in speaking to Jesus, he represented his son both as being lunatic and as possessed by a dumb spirit, and as falling into the fire and the water under this influence.

(Luke ix. 39; Mark ix. 18.)—The child cried out with terror when he felt the presence and influence of his enemy through the fluidic action which preceded subjugation and its effects by the combination of their perisprits. The obsession or subjugation produced a kind of epilepsy, showing itself in strong muscular contraction.

(Matth. xvii. 15, 16; Mark ix. 18, 19; Luke ix. 40, 41.)—In speaking to men, Jesus used human expressions suited to the intelligence of those whom he addressed, and of such a description as to impress them profoundly. The Master's exclamation was addressed to those whose faith was not sufficiently strong; for if they had had more confidence in his words, they would have had more influence. Jesus would then have assisted them by his powerful will, by giving them the secret aid and support of the superior spirits, as he had already done before; for they had already, to some extent, performed actions which were called miraculous, when he sent them into the neighbouring towns, and gave them power to cure the sick, and to cast out demons (Matth. x. 8).

Jesus addressed his disciples in the words, "O faithless and perverse generation," because they had not sufficient confidence, and therefore did not obey him. Do not forget

Digitized by Google

that faith alone can work miracles, whereas those who hesitate or doubt are deprived of their faculties, and led into difficulties which they are not always able to overcome. These words were not intended to apply to the disciples only, but to all the people, by bringing forcibly before them the power and holiness of the Master, whose word alone was sufficient to deliver the child.

(Mark xvii. 19.)—The obsessing spirit made the child feel his influence; who perceiving that an attack was coming on, uttered a cry of terror. Jesus left the spirit to the evil caprices of his free will, till he said to him. "I say unto thee come out of him, and enter no more into him." There was a reason for this: Jesus could have commanded the spirit to depart without convulsing the child, but the action would have lost a great part of its prestige in the eyes of the multitude. You must not forget that Jesus, though acting for the benefit of the child, acted thus for the benefit of the multitude also; everything being pre-arranged for the general good.

(Mark ix. 23.)—Jesus spoke figuratively, as was generally the case; but you can perceive the truth in the figure. What prodigies cannot be effected by the mighty power of faith! All is possible to him who believeth, for the spirits of the Lord gather round to assist him; but let there be no error or misinterpretation. Faith must be clairvoyant, intelligent, foreseeing, and wise. It does not consist in receiving, with bowed head, whatever is given to it in all the mystic absurdity originating in some diseased brain; nor does it consist, especially in the case of the Spiritist, in believing that it is only necessary to call on the aid of good spirits to aid you in trifling or unworthy actions. Faith must be enlightened, for she ought always to march with firm step on the path which leads to God. Faith must be strong; for she must conquer herself in order to obtain what is fitting for her; Faith should be wise, for she ought never to exceed rational limits.

(Mark ix. 24.)—You have here an expression of simplicity and humility. The father believed that Jesus had power to

Digitized by Google

exorcise the spirit; but in the simplicity and humility of his heart he did not feel his faith sufficiently strong to deserve such a mercy; and this very fear spoke in his favour.

(Matth. xvii. 17; Mark ix. 26, 27.)—The cry uttered by the subjugated child was caused by the suffering and convulsion which he experienced from the sudden and violent separation of the two perisprits, which had been combined by the obsessing spirit to produce subjugation. When the subjugation ceased, the child remained as if dead, owing to the exhaustion of the shock which he had experienced; and this was designed to manifest the power of Jesus to the multitude still more strongly. Jesus then took him by the hand, and lifted him up, making use of magnetic action to restore the fluidic power. It was, as you know, an act of will which a benevolent spirit might also have accomplished.

(Matth. xvii. 18; Mark ix. 28.)—The question which the disciples asked Jesus, "Why could not we also cast out this demon?" shows you that they had already healed the sick, and cast out obsessing spirits, to deliver those who were subjugated by them. If they had not already possessed and exercised this power, within certain limits, they would not have been surprised at having failed; and, in fact, would not even have ventured to attempt to cure such a case.

The Master trained his pupils while he was with them. Everything was designed to concur in developing their faith, and qualifying them for the mission that they were required to accomplish when that of Jesus was completed. The power which the disciples possessed of healing diseases and driving away evil spirits, was afterwards to be exercised on a larger scale, without ever failing, through the continual but secret assistance of the superior spirits, after they had entered upon their active mission, and had become capable of safely accomplishing their task. The disciples were gifted with some faculties, which were limited in their scope as long as they moved in a narrow circle, but which were developed suddenly when the proper time had come.

Digitized by Google

Your own medianimity is now like that of the disciples, in its earliest stage; but contrary to what was the case at the time of the disciples, it will culminate during the presence of the Regenerator, a spirit on a superior mission, who will lead humanity up to the point of innocence (that is, perfection) which it ought to attain. But before this, your mediums will obtain isolated results beyond the usual order; and the nearer the time approaches, the more these events will increase and multiply.

We cannot fix the date. The Lord has said, Watch and pray; for you know not at what hour the trumpet shall sound which shall call the dead from their tombs; the hour at which God shall cause elevated spirits to be reborn materially upon your earth who shall give an impetus to the virtues which they preach, by practising them to their fullest extent. The head of the Catholic Church will then be the head indeed, in the true sense of the word; and when the Church of Christ becomes universal, he will form one of the chief pillars of the edifice. When you shall behold him walking in humility, girt with a cord, and the pilgrim's staff in his hand, you may say, "The buds of the fig-tree are beginning to swell; the summer is near."

A superior mission is one designed for the regeneration of humanity, and which predominates over the labours of all other missionaries in completeness and power; and any spirit sent on such a mission is himself superior to all others who are engaged in human work like himself. The head of the Catholic Church will bow to the influence of such a Redeemer; and the Church will then be truly prepared to become universal, as the Church of Christ. You need not pry further into the secrets of futurity, for everything is revealed to you which it is needful for you to know at present.

(Matth. xvii. 19; Luke xvii. 5, 6.)—The explanation which we have given you of the words "All things are possible to those who believe," will help you to understand the true spiritual meaning of the Master, when he said to his disciples, "And nothing shall be impossible to you."

Digitized by Google

This was figurative, for it is obvious that the words do not apply to the material action; but Jesus made his disciples understand that faith would enable them to perform actions which would appear to be as impossible as to command a mountain to move from one place to another, or a tree to be uprooted and cast into the sea.

Do not think that men would have been informed at that time of the material results which might be obtained. This would have led them to search for powers which were still intended to remain unknown. There was a hidden sense in the Master's words; a prophecy veiled, and not openly expressed, of the outward results which the disciples would be able to accomplish at a later period, as they had already sometimes acted, within certain limits, without being aware of it. These words likewise exhort the Spiritists of your own days to act with an intelligent knowledge of causes, to obtain similar results. Such is the sense included in the thought of Jesus, which the New Revelation was designed to reveal. These words apply specially to the Spiritist, as they give him an idea of the results which he may obtain by means of such a Faith as we have already described.

The words spoken by Jesus and recorded by Luke were pronounced at a different place and time from those recorded by Matthew; but we place them together to avoid repetition. The Master's teachings were often essentially the same, but varied in form, according to the place and audience.

(Matth. xvii. 20; Mark ix. 28.)—The more perverse are the impure spirits, the more need is there for the incarnate spirit to raise itself in order to conquer them. A merely erring spirit is more accessible to remonstrances, advice, and kindness; but a great criminal is hardened, and will only yield to force. The spirit who subjugated the child was one of the most perverse.

Consequently, in dealing with demons of this kind, you can only use the moral force which is acquired solely by the elevation and superiority of the incarnate spirit. What can raise your spirit more than prayer and fasting practised

Digitized by Google

spiritually, and from the heart, in the sense which we have explained?

§ 195. What was the fault for which the child had been subjected to this dreadful expiation?

For abusing his moral power in a previous existence. Do you not know the pernicious influence which a developed but perverse spirit may exert on men who are weaker in intelligence? We need not relate the history of the spirit now, for we should only lead you from the path which is traced out for you.

Had the obsessing spirit suffered from the fault of the other?

He had not, and his previous history is of no consequence. But you should understand that the weak and credulous spirit who had been the victim was not very culpable, whereas the part played by the obsessor of the child denoted a perverse nature. There are relations which are brought about by affinity. The guilty spirit attracts his own enemy, because the guides of the spirit who is about to expiate his offences do not oppose the tormentor. Consequently the latter is attracted to his victim by his evil instincts, and seizes upon him believing him to be defenceless; but nevertheless, if he exceeds the limits of the moral or physical suffering which the patient ought to endure, the superior spirits check him immediately.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 22, 23. MARK, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 31, 32. LUKE, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 43–45.

Jesus foretells his Death and Resurrection.

Matth. xvii. (22) And while they were travelling in Galilee, Jesus said to them, The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men; (23) And they shall kill him, and on the third day he shall rise again. And they were greatly distressed.

Mark ix. (31) For he taught his disciples, and told them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and when he has been put to death, he shall rise again on the third day. (32) And they understood not the saying, and feared to ask him.

Luke ix. (43) And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they were all wondering at all the things which Jesus did,

Digitized by Google

he said to his disciples, (44) Keep these sayings in your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men. (45) And they understood not this saying, and it was veiled from them that they should not comprehend it, and they feared to ask him concerning this saying.

§ 196. These verses explain themselves. Jesus revealed future events to his disciples to impress their minds more strongly, and to increase their faith. He prophesied his death, to make his resurrection more imposing. Was this not the effect of the veiled words of Jesus? His disciples understood that their Master was prepared to die; but his "resurrection," as it presented itself to their minds, was an event that they regarded as so extraordinary that they endeavoured to understand how Jesus could be three days absent from their sight. The disciples were ignorant but devoted men; for although they were elevated spirits on a mission, they were subject to the law of the incarnation which they had chosen.

We can explain this by a very ordinary and even trivial comparison, which will nevertheless give you an idea of the influence of matter on spirit, as regards the surroundings amid which the disciples were born and lived, with respect to the object of their mission. Mark the process of compressing a truss of hay, to carry it more easily. Its volume is reduced, and its constituent stalks scarcely seem to exist. But subject it to the action of moisture, and release the pressure, and it soon expands, and regains its former volume.

However developed the spirit may be, if it undergoes an incarnation which is designed to be ignorant, simple, or even idiotic, it has nothing at its disposal but a sluggish intractable instrument, which it cannot use. It is like a piano in which the metallic strings have been replaced by hempen cords; and, however fine the touch of the player, he can draw no sound from it. It was absolutely necessary for the success of the mission of Jesus that his instruments should be ignorant, and known to be so. This greatly enhanced the effect of the subsequent development of their faculties, when the hempen cords were replaced by sonorous strings which interpreted the tone and thought.

Digitized by Google

Jesus had promised to send his disciples the Holy Spirit, (that is, inspiration from heaven, and superior guidance), and this took place when the disciples felt their intellectual faculties developed under the influence of the superior spirits. The torpor of the cerebral matter gave place to lucidity, and their medianimic faculties were developed, to aid them still further in overcoming the obstacles which matter, however slight, opposes to the most elevated spirit when he assumes a body of flesh like yours. Independently of the vital fluid which circulates in the veins, with the blood, and the nervous fluid which gives elasticity to the muscles, nerves, and joints, and aids in the movement of the organic machine, there exists the spiritual fluid which serves to develop the intelligence. This envelopes the cerebral matter which receives impressions, and renders it more or less flexible, and fitted to receive and to retain. If you could see it, you would behold a luminous layer spread over the brain, something like varnish over a table. It is upon this layer of fluids that we operate to transmit thought to you, to produce inspiration, and to act on the vital and nervous fluids in the case of psychographic, or speaking mediums. Your brain, which is the seat and reservoir of the spiritual, vital, and nervous fluids, then becomes, so to speak, the galvanic pile which we set in motion, and which transmits the current to the whole body, according to the effects which are to be produced. These explanations will enable you to understand how the cords of hemp were changed for sonorous cords, under the influence of the superior spirits who aided the Apostles in their mission.

(Matth. xvii. 23; Mark ix. 32; Luke ix. 45.)—The disciples only understood that they were in danger of losing their beloved Master; but the meaning of his death and his resurrection was covered by too thick a veil. It was necessary for the accomplishment of their mission that they should not be able to understand it in spirit and in truth, as it was only designed to be revealed to men by the present Revelation. They were greatly distressed; for they believed that Jesus possessed a human body like their own, and that he

Digitized by Google

would really and physically endure the tortures of a violent death. But this event was designed to be an example of love and self-devotion, attended by emotions similar to the grief that a tender mother experiences for her cruel and murderous children, when they repay with crime the maternal love and devotion which would raise, console, and save them.

"They feared to ask Jesus," for the almost immediate resurrection which seemed to their eyes to be the correlative of a real death, left doubts in their minds of its realization, even as a miracle, which led them to shrink from even questioning him on the subject.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 24–27.

Jesus pays Tithes.

(24) And when they came to Capernaum, the tithe-collectors came to Peter, and said, Does not your Teacher pay tithes? (25) He says, Yes. And when they had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him by saying, What think you, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take tax or tribute? from their own children, or from aliens? (26) Peter says to him, From aliens. Jesus said to him, Then are the children free. (27) But lest we should offend them, go into the sea and cast a net, and take the first fish that comes up, and open his mouth, and you will find a stater; take this, and give it them for me and thee.

§ 197. These verses teach men that they should submit to the laws of their country, however severe and unjust these may appear, or really are, until they are legally repealed by the influence of moral force, guided by reason and enlightened discussion, which in time leads to truth and justice, and to all true civilization and progress.

Before Peter referred the matter to Jesus, he replied to the taxgatherers in the affirmative, because he felt sure that his Master would fulfil all the obligations of a citizen; that is, a man who submits peaceably to the laws of his country, even if apparently or actually unjust in themselves. But although Jesus conformed to the demand, he pointed out the injustice of paying this tribute, in his remarks to Peter.

The children of the kings of the earth denote the natives

Digitized by Google

of the country. In the case of the Romans, the children were the Roman citizens, and the aliens were the conquered nations; but in the case of the Hebrews, and throughout the conquered territories, the aliens were the conquerors, the Roman nation, as represented by its proconsuls; and the children were the native inhabitants, the conquered nations. Therefore the native inhabitants ought not to pay tribute, being on their own soil.

But, at the same time, Jesus ordered Peter to pay the tribute, "lest," as he said, "we should offend them," because the disciples of Jesus were Hebrews, and would gladly have sought a pretext to free them from their obligations towards the foreign power. You must not forget that the Jews always hoped to find a temporal leader in Jesus, and in acting thus, the Master set them a lesson of humility and submission to established laws, even if they were rigorous and unjust, while at the same time he displayed his power by a miracle. This event is to be explained like others which are called miraculous. We have given you general explanations in speaking of the miraculous draught of fishes.

A spirit, by will-power and the aid of spiritual magnetism, directed the action of the fluids which drew the fish to the bottom of the water where the stater was lying, and the current carried the coin into its mouth, and raised it again to the surface, and urged it towards the place where it was captured. Are you not aware that there are great treasures which would excite human cupidity, at the bottom of the sea?

Is there anything extraordinary that the fish which brought the coin to the surface was guided by magnetic currents under spirit action, to the place where it was lying, and took it into its mouth? Jesus said to Peter, "Give them the money for me and thee," because the other disciples were absent at the time, and had paid their own tribute from the common purse.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 1–5. MARK, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 33–41. LUKE, CHAP. IX. VERSES 46–50.

Lessons of Love, Charity, and Humility.

Matth. xviii. (1) In that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens? (2) And Jesus called to a little child, and set it in the midst of them, and said, (3) Verily I say unto you, If you do not change, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens. (4) Therefore whoever shall humble himself as this little child, he shall be the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens. (5) And whoever shall receive such a little child in my name, receiveth me.

Mark ix. (33) And they came to Capernaum, and when they were in the house, he asked them, What were you disputing about on the road? (34) And they were silent, for they had been disputing with each other on the road, who was the greatest. (35) And sitting down, he called the twelve, and said to them, If any one wishes to be first, he shall be the least of all, and the servant of all. (36) And taking a little child, he set it in the midst of them, and taking it in his arms, he said to them, (37) Whoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me, and whoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me. (38) And John answered him, saying, Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name, who does not follow with us, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us. (39) And Jesus said, Do not forbid him, for there is no one who can exert power in my name, and can easily speak ill of me. (40) For whoever is not against us is on our side. (41) For whoever shall give you so much as a cup of cold water to drink, because you are Christ's, verily I tell you he shall by no means lose his reward.

Luke ix. (46) And a dispute arose amongst them, as to which of them should be the greatest. (47) And Jesus seeing the dispute in their hearts, took up a little child, set him among them, and said to them, (48) Whoever shall receive this little child in my name receiveth me, and whoever receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. For he who makes himself the least among you, he shall be great. (49) And John answered and said, Master, we saw some one casting out demons in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. (50) And Jesus said to him, Do not forbid him, for whoever is not against us, is on our side.

§ 198. The words of Jesus, taken together, include lessons of love, charity, aid for the weak, faith, trust, humility and simplicity. Is it not said that he who desires to be the first shall be the last of all, and the servant of all, but that he who is the least among you is the greatest? Everything is comprised in these few words. Be like the child whom Jesus took in his arms; trust in your weakness, and you will find support in him; be simple of heart, and you

Digitized by Google

will find in him the key to all knowledge; be charitable towards your brethren; and you will find in him the most admirable type of charity. Follow the example set by Jesus: be the "little children" whom he takes in his arms; be humble, feeling your ignorance and weakness; be gentle and submissive, knowing that you receive all from one more powerful than yourselves; above all, be trusting, feeling the strength of the mighty arms which support you, and raise you to the height of the Master of masters. Do not seek to raise yourselves by your own efforts, for you would fail. Do not think yourselves of more value in your Father's eyes than your brethren, nor desire to raise yourselves above them; but seek to aid them to rise by giving them the best advice—the advice of your example.

(Matth. xviii. 1; Mark ix. 33, 34; Luke ix. 40.)—The dispute among the Apostles which led to their asking Jesus, "Who should be the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens?" arose from envy, due to the natural tendency of the incarnate spirit. You know that the influence of the flesh upon the spirit is such that even the most elevated suffers from it. The disciples thought that Jesus exhibited a kind of preference for one of them, which led to the envy of the others. There was some excuse for this, for it arose from the great love which they bore towards their Master. John was not more loved, but more loving, which drew him nearer to the Master, and led the others to imagine that he was more favoured.

Do not be surprised at Jesus asking, "What were you disputing about on the road?" You have been told that Jesus read the thoughts of his disciples, even before they were spoken; but you must always remember that the disciples believed that his humanity was like their own, and that it was necessary for Jesus to permit them to believe it.

(Matth. xviii. 3.)—If you do not abandon human notions and tendencies, you cannot enter into the kingdom of the heavens; for the flesh leads to pride, ostentation and ambition. Trust everything to the Master, and never rely upon your own merits. Otherwise you will not attain to perfection.

Digitized by Google

(Mark ix. 34.)—The spirit who seeks for predominance is ruled by pride; but you are aware that pride must be humbled before it can be destroyed. Consequently he who would raise himself above his brethren by pride, falls; for he will have to suffer a base expiation as an inevitable consequence.

(Matth. xviii. 5.)—Simplicity of heart and humility of mind are the source and principle of all virtue, and open the way to all knowledge, and to all moral and intellectual progress.

(Matth. xviii. 4; Mark ix. 36; Luke ix. 48.)—"He who receives a little child in the name of Jesus, receives Jesus." He who bends down to the level of the weak and simple, shares his lot with them, and enables them to profit by the intelligence, strength, and knowledge which have been granted to himself. He imitates the Master, who has done so much for you, and, in acting thus, he draws down to himself the blessings of the Lord; and Christ is pleased with him.

"He who thus receives a little child, receives Jesus, and receives him who sent him." He who obeys the law of love taught by Jesus, eagerly gives his aid and protection to anyone whom he is able to assist in any way. In acting thus, he obeys the law of Christ, and the Lord reads his heart. Thus he receives the Father, for he does not consider what profit he may derive from his conduct. The little child is too weak to do anything for him; and he therefore aids it solely out of love for the Son; and for Him who sent him. Such a man is the least in the eyes of men, and the greatest in the eyes of God, owing to his purity and innocence; that is, his purity of intention, and the integrity of his heart and life.

(Mark ix. 38–40; Luke ix. 49, 50.)—Why desire to stay the course of Faith? Why desire to force men to walk in a path that is open to them, when they can reach the same goal by following a parallel road? Jesus combated from this very time the mystical tyranny which tells you, "Believe and worship with me, or you will be liable to eternal punish-

Digitized by Google

ment." You should understand the benevolent words of the Master, "Forbid him not; he who is not against us, is on our side." Yes, dear ones, he who follows the path of our divine Leader; he who admires his laws, and is not content with a sterile admiration, but practises them, he is for Christ; and he is his brother. His elder brother, who has entered into the kingdom of the Father, and has attained to perfection, is preparing a place there for those who walk in his steps. The Master has not opened one track only to your feet; but you will find his footsteps everywhere where good is to be accomplished. Follow them without making yourselves uneasy about those who would stop you; drive away, in his name, all the "demons" who tempt and assail humanity; begin by driving them from your own hearts, and you will work "miracles" of faith and love; for by working them in the name of Jesus, you will be with him, and he will be with you. He commands us to direct you to advance; and the mercy of the Lord will rest upon you.

The exact words spoken by Jesus were, "He who is not against me is for me;" and the errors of translations are unimportant. Some have rendered them, "He who is not against you is for you; and others, "He who is not against us is for us." The incarnate spirit who did not follow Jesus as a disciple, but who cast out demons in his name, was a missionary spirit. Do not misunderstand us; a spirit may be sent on a mission without being necessarily a superior spirit. In the present instance, he was an enlightened spirit, who had not been prevented from recognising the divine mission of Jesus by the trammels of the flesh; and being animated by a lively and ardent love, he went to preach the Master after his own fashion, although he had only heard him spoken of; and trusting in his name, which he knew must draw down the mercies of the Lord, he drove away the impure spirits, being aided by superior spirits who seconded his efforts. He was an isolated stone, contributing to the building of the edifice. There have been many such in the past, and will be more in the future.

Digitized by Google

(Mark ix. 41.)—"Do acts of charity for the love of God." The love of God is the supreme and universal love. It therefore rises above all the influences of matter, and lends all its energies of mind and soul to the well-being of its brethren, whether known or unknown; friends, or enemies. By thus practising human brotherhood, man draws nearer and nearer to the divine model, and by walking more and more in his steps, he draws nearer to perfection, and thus endeavours to fulfil the saying of Jesus, "Be ye perfect, as your Father in the Heavens is perfect."

§ 199. In Mark ix. 39, and in corresponding verses of the Gospels, what is the true meaning of the word "virtutem"* in the Latin translation, rendered by "miracle," in the English and French versions; having regard to the definition given by the Roman Church to the word "miracle," and the sense which it attaches to it as a derogation from the laws of nature?

Miracle is the only word in your language which could be used to express the idea from your point of view. But your language has no technical word to signify an act beyond the known laws of nature.† The Roman Church should have defined a "miracle" as an event which takes place by the will of God, according to actual and unchangeable laws of nature which are still unknown to man, but which have existed from all eternity; and an event which the Church, like your human science, is obliged to recognize as taking place, by the permission of God, under spirit-action.

LUKE, CHAP. IX.—VERSES 51–56.

Calling down Fire from Heaven.

(51) And it came to pass that when the days were fulfilled that he should be received up, he himself both set his face to journey to Jerusalem, (52) And sent messengers before his face; and while they were travelling, they came to a village of the Samaritans to prepare for him. (53) And they would not receive him, because his face was

* The Greek word is *δύναμιν*, and literally means power.—TRANSL.

† Of course the original reference is to French. Perhaps "preternatural," as opposed to "supernatural," would express the idea in English.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

as though he would go to Jerusulem. (54) And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, Master, wilt thou that we shall call fire from heaven to fall upon them and destroy them, as Elijah did? (55) And he turned round and rebuked them and said, Do ye not know what manner of spirit ye are of? (56) For the Son of Man is not come to destroy the lives of men, but to save them. And they travelled to another village.

§ 200. (V. 51.) The time, which was approaching when Jesus should be received up, was the moment when he disappeared from the eyes of men. The word ascension expressed the thought, because it seemed to the assembled disciples that Jesus rose up until they could see him no longer.

(V. 53.) There was nothing extraordinary in the refusal of the Samaritans to receive Jesus. You know that the Samaritans did not share in the ideas of the Jews, properly so called, and that the temple at Jerusalem had not the same prestige in their eyes as in those of the Israelites.

(V. 54.)—It was under the influence of national ideas and traditions that James and John, who were abandoned to their own impulses, asked Jesus to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans. They thought that the destruction of the village and its inhabitants would strike others with astonishment and terror, and thus increase the power of the Master. They spoke under a retrograde influence, instead of following the path of progress which Jesus had impressed upon them. Consequently, Jesus rebuked them, saying, "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." This was an example of charity, like everything which the Master said or did. And as regards James and John, you will remember that when Jesus selected the Apostles, he called them Boanerges; that is, the sons of thunder, because he foresaw this event.

The law of Moses was stern and cruel; but it was suited to the age and people. Milder teachings were needful to improve those violent natures whom the ages had enlightened. They needed a law which taught them love for hatred, pardon for insult, and kindness for injury.

Jesus came not to abolish the Law, but to fulfil it. The law of Moses was a shapeless mass which the Master handed

Digitized by Google

over to the workmen to hew into shape. Ages have worn away the roughest inequalities and the sharpest angles. Jesus came and gave it shape, and polished its outlines with his sharp, strong chisel. Centuries have passed away, and the material is softened. It is now time to complete the work; the master has taken his graving-tool, and is about to develop the most delicate tracings. Divine love is about to appear on these marble lineaments, and is ready to pierce to this heart of stone; and when the work is finished, and the breath of the Divine Artist shall have given it life, the statue will be animated by all the virtues, and will show the world that Jesus came not to abolish the Law, but to justify, and make it perfect.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 6–11. LUKE, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 1, 2. MARK, CHAP. IX. VERSES 42–50.

Offences.

Matth. xviii. (6) But whoever shall cause offence to one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone such as those which are turned by an ass should be hung upon his neck, and he should be cast into the abyss of the sea. (7) Woe to the world because of offences, for it is needful that offences should come, but woe to that man through whom the offence cometh! (8) And if thy hand or thy foot give thee cause of offence, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or lame, than having two feet or two hands to be cast into the age-lasting fire. (9) And if thy eye give thee cause of offence, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire. (10) Beware lest ye despise one of the least of these, for I say unto you that their angels in the heavens behold through all the face of my Father in the heavens. (11) For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.

Luke xvii. (1) And he said to the disciples, It is impossible that offences should not come, but woe to him through whom it cometh? (2) It were profitable for him if a millstone such as is turned by an ass were hung round his neck, and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause offence to one of these little ones.

Mark ix. (42) And whoever shall give cause of offence to one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him if a millstone were hung round his neck, and he were cast into the sea. (43) And if thy hand give thee cause of offence, cut it off, for it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire. (44) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (45) And if thy foot should

Digitized by Google

give thee cause of offence, cut it off, for it is well for thee to enter into life lame, rather than having two feet to be cast into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire. (46) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (47) And if thy eye give thee cause of offence, cast it away, for it is well for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire. (48) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (49) For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. (50) Salt is good, but if the salt becomes saltless, how shall it be salted? Have salt in yourselves, and live peaceably with one another.

§ 201. (Matth. xviii. 6; Mark ix. 42; Luke xvii. 2.)—He who gives offence to a child; he who by his words and example leads into evil one of his brethren, however despicable he believes him, is guilty in the eyes of God, not of his own fault only, but of the faults which he has caused others to commit; and he will have to expiate them. Endeavour to destroy in yourselves every root of sin, and every infraction of the divine law. Tear from yourselves everything which could lead you into evil of any kind, and strive to understand the true meaning of the words of Jesus. Destroy in yourselves whatever leads you into evil, no matter what suffering it may occasion you. It is better to suffer for a few days of your miserable existence, by breaking away from your vices, than to risk incurring ages of suffering in the errant life of the guilty spirit. Remember that the devouring fire is not quenched, and that the gnawing worm does not die. It is a burning and incessant suffering which consumes the spirit without ever annihilating it; it is a continual torture during every second of life in the errant state, without any hope of its ever ending; for hope is the drop of water which falls on thirsty lands; the manna gathered by the starving; the balm spread over the bleeding wound; and the guilty spirit cannot hope until repentance has opened his heart to it.

(Matth. xviii. 7; Mark ix. 43; Luke xvii. 2.)—It is impossible that you should not find spirits less advanced, or more obstinate in evil than others. They lead others into evil by their wicked actions, and their bad advice and example. Woe to these men! They would do better if they acknowledged their moral inferiority, and did not

Digitized by Google

incarnate themselves in too elevated centres, or in a part of your planet which is too civilized for them. Their ignorance and vices may mislead those around them, and cause scandal by checking them in their efforts, or leading them into a fall. It would be better for them if they waited to be incarnated until they were prepared to enter upon a better life; but they must endure the punishment due to their pride and evil tendencies. They are forewarned before incarnation of the good and evil consequences, which are likely to result to themselves and others from the natural tendencies of their spirit. If they persist, they accept the consequences of their conduct beforehand; it is a bill which they have signed, and which they must pay when it falls due.

Spirits have free choice of the worlds where they desire to incarnate themselves, provided that they remain within limits corresponding to their degree. A spirit who departs from his station never does so without being forewarned of the consequences which his rashness may entail upon him. If this would be injurious to others, and especially if he desires it from malice, for the simple purpose of injuring those among whom he would find himself, the spirit would be forbidden to go beyond the grade of incarnation in which he would be among his equals in advancement, intelligence, and morality. Consequently the incarnations of inferior spirits in a relatively superior grade, are generally due to two causes. The first is the desire of progress; a rash desire, though sincere at the time. The other cause is the necessity of producing a strong impression on the nations or even families among whom these incarnations take place; and they lead to progress among both classes. The introduction of these inferior beings into your midst always serves as a punishment or expiation, and consequently contributes to the progress of those who are their victims; and perhaps still more to the progress of those who struggle against evil example and advice, and come forth victorious. It also contributes to the morality and progress of the spirit who is born out of his station; and

Digitized by Google

his intercourse with those more elevated than himself leads to his establishing relations with them; and he thus receives the good seed which will one day spring up in him. Spirits do not always exercise free choice in the selection of their experiences; for there are limits. The spirit who desires to progress, however backward he may be, has the choice of the means of attaining it. He is guided in his selection; but nevertheless the perverse spirit suffers the punishment and trials which are inflicted on him, at a fitting time and place. The spirit who perseveres in evil is compelled to wait till he is permitted to reincarnate himself. Sometimes he does not wish it, and is compelled to submit to incarnation as a means of development and purification for himself. He is then sent to a scene selected for the purpose, so that his incarnation should be profitable to himself, and should also conduce to the advancement of those who receive him among them. Thus the spirit is not always permitted to incarnate himself or not, as he pleases. As regards his experiences, free will and free choice are the rule, in the majority of cases, whatever may be his perversity, and his wicked ends and aims in incarnation; but there are exceptions harmonizing with the condition of those to whom they refer. If the incarnation of spirits hardened in evil was always voluntary, it would disturb the laws which have been established for the progress of all.

You live in a state of society which is generally composed of inferior spirits, among whom there are only a few elevated ones. Consequently, there are very guilty ones among them who cause offences. Woe to them, for they will have to expiate them! They are a touchstone to those who believed themselves strong enough to resist temptations to evil, and bad example. If their confidence has misled them, and they are not strong enough to resist, they also will have to expiate both the faults which they have committed, and the pride which led them to venture upon a more difficult experience than they ought to have attempted. It is therefore necessary that there should be offences in the world, for it is by contact with vice that virtue itself is

Digitized by Google

strengthened by accustoming itself to overcome them; but woe to those who have brought the offence, and woe also, though in a less degree, to those who suffer themselves to be led astray!

Gentleness, faith, and good example are the means by which Spiritists should strive to spread the New Revelation. These methods will succeed with some of your brethren, but all are not yet prepared to receive it. You should proclaim your beliefs openly, and state their foundations with persuasive gentleness; but if you meet with obstinate natures (and these are many) leave them to themselves. Either in this existence, or in later ones, time will effect what you yourselves were unable to accomplish. The future is long; for it includes eternity.

(Matth. xviii. 8, 9; Mark ix. 43–48.)—He who lives in evil, does not enter into eternal life. After death, he passes into a limited spiritual existence, wholly of suffering; and he only quits it after repentance, to recommence a new earthly life of trial and expiation. But he who has succeeded in freeing himself from the sources of the faults which might lead him astray, enters into spiritual life; for he sees the future which is reserved for him unfolding before his eyes. Consequently he enters into the kingdom of the heavens; that is, into the path which leads to perfection, for the earth disappears from him from the moment when he has reached a degree of purity which enables him to comprehend the eternal existence which is spiritual life; the normal life of the spirit in space. When he has reached this point, he may recommence an earthly mission, no longer as an expiation, but as an experience, if he has not attained to moral perfection, and even if he has attained this point, an earthly mission may be useful to enlarge his knowledge to an extent corresponding to the moral progress which he has attained. A spirit may be greatly advanced morally, and yet have much needful knowledge to acquire. It is not necessary for him to acquire it on your earth, when he has attained to a certain degree of advancement; for yours is not the only world of material incarnations. Think what a small speck

Digitized by Google

you inhabit, whereas worlds are innumerable in their differences, conditions, and the various degrees which separate or connect compact matter and the fluidic state by insensible gradations. Consequently the progress which the spirit makes on your earth or on others for the good of humanity, is greatly enlarged when he returns to the spiritual state. What he learns in his prison of flesh, perfects itself all at once when he is at liberty. The artist, shut in a narrow room, models the statue which he wishes to carve; but when he is released, he gives it gigantic proportions, because he is in possession of the needful materials, and has air, space, and a grand view around him.

(Mark ix. 49.)—Fire emblematically expresses expiation as a means of purification, and therefore progress for the guilty spirit. Among the Hebrews, salt was the emblem of purification for every victim offered as a sacrifice to the Lord. In order to make himself intelligible, Jesus used figurative expressions selected from Hebrew customs, prejudices, and traditions. You know that fallen and guilty spirits must free themselves from moral impurities by expiation, reparation, and progress, and must suffer incarnation and successive reincarnations on the inferior worlds, for the sake of gaining experience, each earthly existence being followed, and the next preceded, by expiation in the spiritual world, consisting of moral sufferings and tortures appropriate to their offences. Then, when they have been purified from everything which was a cause of offence to themselves and their brethren, they no longer require to be "salted with fire," or to be cast into the Gehenna of fire, where the gnawing worm never dies, and the consuming fire is never quenched. The spirits then continue their progress by successive but no longer expiatory reincarnations in more and more elevated worlds, which are the abodes of peace and happiness, until the influence of matter over them has wholly ceased, and they become pure spirits.

(Mark ix. 50.)—Be worthy in yourselves, but let not your merit become a source of disorders; for the Lord can destroy it by the nature of the next incarnation, and you

Digitized by Google

would become like the salt which has lost its saltness; that is, worthless. Strive to gain worth in the eyes of God and man, and let all your efforts tend towards this object. It will give a great impetus to your progress; but do not pride yourselves upon your merit; for however great it may seem to yourselves, or in the eyes of men, it has but little savour in the eyes of the Lord. Do not therefore lose the little worth which it may possess by making it intolerable to those around you. Never forget that you are nothing before the Great Being, and that it is in his eyes only that you ought to aspire to become worthy. Do not parade your merit before others, nor seek to make them perceive it, and still less admire it; but strive in humility of heart to increase it until it shall be pleasing to your Father, by the intellectual, and more especially moral, progress that it shall have caused yourselves and your brethren to make.

(Matth. xviii. 10.)—The Master held up infancy to his disciples as an emblem of purity and virtue. The guardian angels of pure and virtuous men are elevated spirits, and are therefore in a state of purity which draws them nearer to God; for it permits them to communicate with more elevated spirits who are the messengers of the pure and perfect spirits who "see" God. But yet Jesus spake figuratively. The spirits who approach the Lord, and "see" him, are too elevated to descend to humanity. Their mission is more general, and more extended; they diffuse the lustre which radiates from the Lord throughout the worlds; and we transmit and soften it to enable you to bear it.

(Matth. xviii. 11.)—When Jesus spoke thus, his thoughts embraced the past, the present, and the future. The Law was given to men to direct them; but they had abused it. They no longer obeyed its commandments, but travestied its precepts, and made tradition the basis of their dogmas. Jesus came to save those who had lost their way, for he opened up to them a new path, which was an extension of that from which they had strayed; but this path has once more become encumbered with dogmas, traditions, and interpretations; the confused ruins of the building which Jesus

Digitized by Google

had raised so high with so much simplicity and clearness, by proclaiming the love of God above all things, and of the neighbour as oneself, which commandments imply and include the observance of the Decalogue. If men would teach and practise this twofold law, they would become the true worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, whom he desires to worship him, and consequently members of the Church of Christ, whose temple is your planet, and whose followers are those who practise this double love, with simplicity and devotion, and thus work by teaching and example towards the fulfilment of the Master's promise, "There shall be one fold, and one Shepherd."

Jesus still comes to seek for and save that which was lost. He comes, by the New Revelation, and by the spirits of the Lord, to bring back to the right path, in the name of the Spirit of Truth, those who were lost. Strive not to deny him again; for the further you advance, the more direct should be your course.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 12–14. LUKE, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 1–10.

The Lost Sheep and the Lost Drachma.

Matth. xviii. (12) What seems it to you? If a certain man should have a hundred sheep, and one of them should go astray, doth he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains, to go and seek for that which has strayed. (13) And if he should find it, verily I say unto you that he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which had not strayed? (14) So it is not the will of your Father in the heavens that one of these little ones should be lost?

Luke xv. (1) And there drew nigh to him all the tax-gatherers and sinners to hear him. (2) And the Scribes and Pharisees murmured, saying, He receives sinners, and eats with them. (3) And he spoke to them this parable, saying, (4) If any man among you has a hundred sheep, and loses one of them, does he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after the lost one, until he finds it? (5) And when he finds it, he takes it on his shoulders rejoicing. (6) And going into his house, he invites his friends and neighbours, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep. (7) I say unto you that there is joy in heaven over one repentant sinner, rather than over ninety-nine just persons, who have no need of repentance. (8) Or any woman having ten drachmæ, if she should lose one drachma, does she not light a lamp and sweep the house, and seek carefully till she finds it? (9) And when she has found it, she invites her female friends and

Digitized by Google

neighbours, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma which was lost. (10) Thus I say unto you There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one repentant sinner.

§ 202. The same idea underlies the parables of the lost sheep and the lost drachma; but the latter appealed more forcibly to the poor to whom Jesus spoke. Jesus came to aid those who are weak, or those who are struggling against the difficulties in their path, and are liable to fall back. The father of a family watches tenderly over the sick child, and his heart leaps with joy when he beholds him restored to health.

The well-beloved Son of the Father has acted thus ever since the appearance of man upon your planet. All his loving care is concentrated on his sheep, but those who suffer, or those whom a bad shepherd has led astray, are those over whom he exerts his most active vigilance. He then seeks and calls them, and his joy is great when his loving voice has found its way to the heart of him who was lost! O then the good Shepherd runs towards the sheep who has answered his call; he lifts it in his arms, and brings it back to the fold, that it may not again wander from the flock!

(Luke xv. 7.) When Jesus alluded to the joy of recovering the lost sheep, he did not seek to turn aside the just from the right way. You must not suppose that the just mean those who have never fallen, for no perfect spirits are incarnated on your planet; but the just are those who have ceased to fall; or more correctly, those who make earnest, constant and sustained efforts not to fall again.

Those who do not understand the object of the Master's words, often accuse him of discouraging the efforts of the righteous, by representing the repentant sinner as more precious in his eyes than the just. Not so; they only express the tenderness of God towards all his creatures, which leads him to feel transports of joy at the return of a lost sheep. This explanation, however, is itself symbolical. The Lord in his infinite foresight always knows that you will return to him, and when you will return; and therefore this emotion of joy is to be attributed rather to the spirits who

Digitized by Google

are commissioned to lead you back. You can understand this. If one of your children is seized with a dangerous illness, do you not feel emotions of joy and gratitude towards God, upon his recovery, which your other children do not awaken? Yet you do not love him more than his brothers; and if he should grow up exhibiting evil propensities, from which his brothers are free, do you not lavish all your care upon him who might go astray and ruin himself in the eyes of the world? And if your efforts are crowned with success, do you not experience a great happiness? Yet you do not love him more than his brothers, but the difficulties overcome and the victories gained have given more value to success.

Those who find fault with the words of Jesus as representing the repentant sinner as more precious in his sight than the just, do not understand their meaning. Each must always receive according to his deserts; but we who are commissioned to lead you back, and whom the Master called the angels of God, watch over you like the shepherd over his sheep, and employ all our efforts to gather you under the Master's eye, and we are permitted to rejoice, when we have found a lost sheep which we can restore to the fold.

Jesus said, "Your Father in the heavens does not desire that one of these little ones should be lost." No creature of the Lord can remain estranged from him; and at some moment or other, they will all gather around his feet. Eternity is yours; labour to attain the place which is reserved for you in eternal life, for the sooner you obtain it, the sooner you will enter into this existence of happiness, where all is work, charity, love, knowledge and progress.

If the leaders of the Church had understood the words of Jesus, they would never have insisted on eternal punishment, and the fall of the angels. Upon this fall, they base the doctrine of eternal damnation, a double error arising from the letter which killeth, and the rejection of the spirit which giveth life. The progress of intelligence and modern conscience has already condemned this error as false and

Digitized by Google

monstrous in the name of the omnipotence, justice, goodness, and infinite mercy of God, the Father of all and everything which exists, who embraces all his creatures in his universal and infinite love. The New Revelation likewise condemns this double error in the name of Jesus, through the Spirits of the Lord, who are the organs of the Spirit of Truth.*

§ 203. It has been said that there is something touching in the parable of the lost sheep, but that the joy of the woman at recovering the lost drachma is a wholly material emotion which inspires but little interest.

Those who speak thus should reflect, and try to understand the Master's words before attempting to criticise them. We have told you that Jesus spoke to the poor; and the principle sentiment in the parable of the lost drachma appealed to the poorer classes, to whom the smallest sum acquires a great importance by the difficulty of procuring it, and the labour of earning it. The material sentiment, which is only the instrument of the parable, is highly interesting, for it is intended to show the poorer classes that everything which is lost in a spiritual point of view should excite the same zeal to recover it, and the same joy upon its recovery. Repentance for neglected virtues, and sorrow for the vices which have replaced them, is the way to recover what has been lost, and afterwards to make it useful for moral and intellectual progress. O, then, our joy—the joy of the spirits of the Lord, whom the Master called the angels of God, is great indeed! How we have sought for the lost drachma! How happy we are to have recovered it, and to say to men, "Children whom we love, we still hold in our hands the source of the nourishment which not only sustains the perishable body, but the immortal soul. We have that which will nourish and strengthen you until you are strong enough to attain to God."

* There is much difference of opinion among students of spirit-philosophy, owing to the well-known fact of circles generally attracting to them spirits whose ideas are more or less in harmony with those of the sitters; but I am not aware that any Spiritists continue to maintain the doctrine of eternal punishment.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

Can you not imagine the joy of the woman who recovers part of the property which she had lost? Think of the poor mother, surrounded by her children, whose husband will return from work, worn out with fatigue. How can she say to him, "One of the ten drachmas earned so painfully, the hope and means of support for the family, is lost"? But the courageous mother does not allow herself to give way; and she searches and searches till she finds her lost drachma, the means of support for her husband and children, and her joy is great! Now, for every day that her savings hold out, she can give her husband and children the bread which they need to sustain and strengthen them.

LUKE, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 11–32.

The Prodigal Son.

(11) And he said, A certain man had two sons. (12) And the younger of them said to his father, Father give me the share of property which falleth to me. And he divided his living between them. (13) And not many days after, the younger son gathered everything together, and went abroad into a distant country, and there squandered his property, living profligately. (14) And when he had spent everything, there arose a great famine in that country, and he began to be in want. (15) And he went and contracted himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into the fields to feed swine. (16) And he longed to fill his stomach with the locust-pods that the swine did eat; and no one gave unto him. (17) And coming to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father have a superfluity of bread, and I perish with hunger! (18) I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, (19) And am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. (20) And he arose and came to his father. And while he was yet a long way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and embraced him. (21) And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. (22) But the father said to his slaves, Bring out the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and sandals on his feet. (23) And bring in the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; (24) For this my son was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. (25) But his elder son was in the field, and as he came and drew near the house, he heard music and dancing. (26) And calling one of his servants, he asked him what these things meant? (27) And he said to him, Thy brother has come, and thy father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him in good health. (28) And he was angry, and did not wish to go in. Then his father came out and invited him. (29) And he answered and said to his father, Lo, I

Digitized by Google

serve thee so many years, and have never transgressed thy commandment at any time; and thou hast never given me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. (30) But when this son of thine came, who has wasted thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. (31) And he said to him, Child, thou art with me at all times, and all that I have is thine. (32) It was fitting that we should make merry and rejoice, for this brother of thine was dead, and is alive again; and he was lost, and is found.

§ 204. The Great Father has long ago given you your share of the goods, but what use have you made of them? Instead of showing him your love and gratitude, you have squandered the treasures which he has entrusted to you. Your inheritance is knowledge, virtue, and eternal life in the presence of the Lord; and you have squandered these treasures among bad companions; for you have lost them amid the various vices in which you have indulged. Then the famine has made itself felt; for it is severe in the country where you are living. You have felt that you must live, and you seek to return to the Father's house. Do not loiter on the way, for no matter how miserable and guilty you may be, the Great Father will receive you with open arms, and his servants will be eager to make a feast for the child who has returned.

§ 205. Some have objected that the Prodigal Son may wish to return not from the love of good, but from the desire of exchanging misery for prosperity.

You forget that Jesus often uses figurative expressions which may apply both to the body and the soul. There are some exceptions, but they are self-evident. After the Prodigal Son has squandered his treasures (his strength, knowledge, and wisdom), and wasted his time and intelligence, he feels the famine which preys upon him. He feels the void within him, and weariness overpowers him, and leads him into the service of evil passions which exhaust without nourishing him. While suffering in this miserable condition, he thinks bitterly of all that he has lost; and it is then that he remembers his Father—his God, so tender and merciful, who can alone restore his lost treasures to the guilty child; and he comes, humble and repentant, to say to the Lord, "My

Digitized by Google

Father and my God, I have sinned against thee; I thought myself strong enough to dispose of the riches which thou hast confided to me according to my own pleasure, without advice or aid. I have claimed them before the time, and knew not how to use them; I have exhausted them, O my God, and now thou beholdest me destitute, no longer possessed of the intelligence which directs; no longer loving the knowledge which elevates; or possessed of strength for the increasing struggle. I am hungry, and I feel that thou didst not create me to live in this abject condition, and my aspirations turn towards thee, for thou alone canst enable me to recover what I have lost. O my Father, open thine arms to receive thy penitent child, and restore its strength, intelligence, and love to my soul, that I may perceive more clearly the faults which I have committed against thee, and may constantly endeavour to repair them."

§ 206. What is the meaning of the parable in connection with the words of Jesus? (Luke xiv. 34, 35.) "Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltness, how shall it be salted? It is good neither for the land nor for the dunghill, but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

He who perseveres in evil, and will listen to no advice, is like sterile corn. It is not fit to be cast into the earth, for it would produce nothing, nor is it fit to be thrown upon the dunghill, for the dunghill should aid in fertilizing the ground, and the sterile corn is useless to the good seed, but would appropriate a share of the nourishing juices of the soil. It would not come to perfection, and the feeble and unproductive stalk which might spring from it, would injure the rest, without yielding anything itself. The man who remains obstinately hardened becomes incapable of yielding the fruits of example and morality which might be profitable to his fellows. He absorbs the care and attention of those who devote themselves to him, which, though unprofitable to himself, would be useful to well-intentioned men. Consequently these men are cast down into the inferior worlds, as the bad corn is thrown into the fire; and eternities will be passed there in wailing and gnashing of

Digitized by Google

teeth; for it will require ages of ages, not to bring the primitive worlds to perfection, but even to raise them to the present level of your own.

The converted sinner feels great joy among those who love him; but his conversion does not destroy the consequences of his offence, although it lightens them. What does expiation actually consist in? The consciousness of past evil, and efforts to repair it. What spirit who repents of his faults will not preserve a remembrance of them bitter in proportion to the greatness of the mercy of the Lord, no matter how fully he may feel himself pardoned? What spirit would not joyfully attempt anything in the world to efface the traces of the misspent past, and to regain and deserve the mercies which have been vouchsafed to him? Does not an honest man feel the pangs of conscience whenever he has been led to deviate from the course which he feels to be the only honourable one? And is not his sole desire to repair the evil by effacing it with good? And if this is the case with some among you, what must it not be with spirits, all whose senses are extremely acute and highly developed? The justice of the Lord must always take its course in expiation and reparation, which are the paths of purification and progress for guilty spirits; but he who can look back upon the past, can lighten the future. Never forget this.

§ 207. What is the meaning of verses 26–32, relating to the elder son?

(V. 26, 27.)—The servant's reply is designed to show the reception given by the Lord to a sincere penitent, the joys which he reserves for him, and the spiritual aid which he grants him if he thus repents, to enable him to walk, without interruption or backsliding, in the path which he has left.

(V. 28–30.)—The elder son's reply to his father exhibits the secret tendency of man which leads him into jealousy and selfishness, and causes him to envy what is done for his brethren, and to look upon their lot as superior to his own. The reply sprang from this selfishness and envy; for man does not regard the daily mercies which he himself receives,

Digitized by Google

but is jealous of those which he believes to be granted to others. What recompense should the Lord give him? Is it not enough that he allows him to share in his mercies? Moreover, the feast given in honour of the prodigal's return contains no pledge for the future, nor does it release him from any labour or responsibility. His return is celebrated by a feast to-day; but to-morrow he will have to return to his place, and to work with so much the more zeal and activity, because the work which was given him to do has remained so long in abeyance.

(V. 31, 32.)—The father's words are designed to show that all are equal before God. It is the same idea as that which underlies the parable of the labourers in the vineyard. The father had divided his property between these two sons, and each had received an equal share; but he who remained with his father lived in common with him ("all that I have is thine"); that is, while profiting by the favours already bestowed upon him, he receives fresh mercies daily; but as he often becomes indifferent to them from habit, he does not realize this, and is jealous when he sees what is done for those who return to the same condition as himself.

(V. 32.)—The guilty spirit who perseveres in evil is dead, because his condition is the emblem of death; for death being strictly the cessation of all movement, it is figuratively the cessation of all progress. Repentance brings him to life again, by enabling him to resume his upward march; and in this sense also he was lost and is found.

LUKE, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 1-9.

Parable of the Unjust Steward.

(1) And he said to his disciples, There was a certain rich man who had a steward; and this man was accused to him of wasting his property. (2) And he called him, and said to him, What is this which I hear of you? Render an account of your stewardship, for you cannot act as steward any longer. (3) And the steward said to himself, What shall I do, for my master deprives me of the stewardship? I cannot dig, and I am ashamed to beg. (4) I know what I will do, that when I am thrust out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. (5) And summoning to him every one of the debtors of

Digitized by Google

his master, he said to the first, How much do you owe my master? (6) And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said to him, Take your bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. (7) Then he said to another, And how much do you owe? And he said, A hundred measures of corn. And he said to him, Take your account, and write eighty. (8) And the master of the unjust steward commended him, because he had acted prudently; for the sons of this age are more prudent than the children of light in their own generation. (9) And I say unto you, Make yourselves friends of the unrighteous mammon, that when ye fail, it may receive you into the age-long habitations.

§ 208. This comparison has not been understood. Jesus says, the master praises his defaulting steward, who has secured his future by making friends among his debtors, though at his master's expense. What, then, will not the Lord do for those who have prepared friends for themselves in the life eternal, by using their earthly wealth to do good, and entitling themselves to the gratitude and affection of others by relieving their sufferings! Although gratitude and affection are often disregarded on earth, yet they always awaken with fresh life and vigour in the world of spirits. The parable is not an example, as the malice of some would make it, or as others have supposed, who have ignorantly desired to preach from every letter of every verse which composes it; but simply a comparison.

§ 209. What is the true meaning of v. 8?

It is the sequel of the same comparison. If a man can commend his servant for his foresight, although acting fraudulently, and against his interests, how much more will not the Lord show himself indulgent to those who have employed their earthly wealth to do good, and thus to attach to themselves grateful friends! Nor must you take the words, "unrighteous mammon," literally. They were designed to make a strong impression on the material men of that age; and the term of contempt is used to show man the little value which he ought to set upon worldly wealth, which generally leads to evil.

At that period he who could turn events to his own profit, even by a bad action, was considered clever and intelligent; whereas he who allowed himself to float with the current was

Digitized by Google

considered a fool. Is it not, unfortunately, still the same in the eyes of some men of your own period? Jesus endeavoured to render his idea comprehensible by a homely illustration. If a man approves of the foresight of one of his fellows, even when manifested by a fraud of which he himself is the victim, what favour will not the Lord show to him who shall have employed the perishable and dangerous goods of the earth to acquire friends who plead his cause, and help him to enter into the eternal refuge! Even when he has been guilty, his good actions will be credited to him, and will lessen the sufferings reserved for the wicked.

"The sons of this age are more prudent than the sons of light in their generation." The meaning is obvious, for man thinks much more of his material than of his spiritual future. Even those who possess light, and desire to succeed, are comparatively indifferent, and overlook many opportunities of seeking the favour of the Lord, whereas worldlings who seek to improve their present affairs or their material future, act with much more determination and energy.

§ 210. What is the real meaning of v. 9?

We have already told you that Jesus applies the term, "unrighteous mammon" to earthly riches, which are so often a source of evil to man. He tells you to use this fertile source of evil to do good. Change it into a fount of gratitude and love, for even if your acts are evil and your faults numerous, you will meet with friends who are grateful for the good that you have done them, who will help you to endure the consequences, and will unceasingly implore the divine mercy on your behalf.

§ 211. Some one has made the following criticism on the parable of the Unjust Steward: "A man is going to dismiss his steward, because he is told that he is wasting his property. The steward tries to get himself out of the scrape by a remarkable piece of roguery. He calls together his master's debtors, and arranges to give each, in exchange for the bond which he has signed, another of less value. Thus, an amount which was previously 100 becomes reduced to 50 or 80; and these are the friends whom the steward secures for the future. Then the master hears of the whole affair (we are not told how), and how do you think he acts? Certainly he will punish his dishonest servant, or

Digitized by Google

at least send him away, as he was already about to do on account of his former defalcations. By no means: after the last affair he has completely changed his intentions; and so great is his esteem for one who is commonly termed a sharper, that he now praises the unjust steward for his prudent conduct. We are not told that he kept him on; but that is understood. The conclusion relates to the use of badly-acquired wealth; but the unfaithful steward did not use his own wealth to provide for his future; but property that was not his—in short, his master's; and his act was neither more nor less than a robbery. The explanation, from a Christian point of view, is that it is necessary to sanctify badly-acquired wealth by giving alms to the poor."

The explanation is as worthless as the criticism; in fact, it is more so; for the criticism is simply based on the letter without the spirit. The only means of quieting the reproaches of conscience for badly acquired wealth is by restitution. You will find it difficult to persuade the masses to accept the spirit when freed from the letter. Some are attached to the letter from ignorance, and others from hostility. They do not seek for the meaning of the thought, but confine themselves to the letter, which is a sure method (or at least they believe so) to overwhelm with ridicule everything which they are unable to understand. It is not that those men who destroy at pleasure are deficient in intelligence, but they do not write in good faith, and even if they are sincere, their interpretations are warped by pride and foregone conclusions, or by their inability to perceive the spirit hidden under the letter. We have only to repeat that the parable is not an example, but merely a comparison between the judgment which a man forms upon an evil action, because it is clever and prudent, though fraudulent, and the favourable judgment of God respecting those who strive to do well, notwithstanding their previous faults. You should reflect on the period and manners of the age, and the character of the men to whom the parable was addressed. Jesus does not separate this part of the parable from that which follows it, and which we are about to explain. If you reflect upon the entire parable, and its interpretation, you will refrain from resting on the letter which killeth, and supposing that the Sublime Model could ever have sanctioned and praised fraud or evil actions.

Digitized by Google

LUKE, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 10–12.

Conclusion of the Parable of the Unjust Steward.

(10) He that is faithful in little, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in little, is unjust also in much. (11) If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will trust the true to you? (12) And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will entrust your own to you?

§ 212. This last paragraph of the parable reveals the thought of Jesus, who availed himself of a comparison which the masses could understand and appreciate, and then destroyed, to the thinking mind, the appearance of approbation which some supposed him to express for the unjust steward. He denounces him who tampers not only with celestial, but also with worldly wealth.

(V. 10.)—He who desires to walk in the ways of the Lord should never tamper with his conscience. Let him never think that any fault is so slight that it may be overlooked, or that any defect is too trifling to be corrected; for he will gradually glide over the precipice; and he who strains the eternal laws in little things, will also strain them in great things. Watch over yourselves unceasingly; and let your outward actions be as irreproachable as your thoughts.

(V. 11.)—Are not worldly goods, earthly treasures, and unrighteous mammon (so called because they are so often a source of evil to man), a means entrusted to you to enable you to acquire the eternal riches? But if you make a bad use of them, you draw down punishment on yourselves instead of blessings and rewards. Human life is the key which opens the gates of the sanctuary to you, but it is a brittle key which breaks in the hands of him who does not know how to use it. He is then obliged to wait until he is entrusted with another which he learns to use better.

(V. 12.)—The wrongs you inflict on your brethren, and the evil which you have done, will recoil upon yourselves. If good can blot out previous evil, evil can also temporarily stay the efficacy of good. We say temporarily; for the infinite mercy of the Lord never allows the smallest particle of good to be lost. Evil often crushes and paralyses it, but

Digitized by Google

the Lord will one day search for it, and will preserve it for you. Hope ever, without faintheartedness, for evil can never obliterate good, whereas good always lessens evil.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 15–17. LUKE, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 3–4.

Pardon of Injuries.

Matth. xviii. (15) And if thy brother shall sin against thee, go and tell him, between thou and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. (16) But if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two others besides, that every word may be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses. (17) But if he refuse to hear them, tell it to the Church, and if he also refuses to hear the Church, let him be to thee as a Gentile and taxgatherer.

Luke xvii. (3) Look to yourselves; and if thy brother shall sin against thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, pardon him. (4) And if he shall sin against thee seven times a day, and seven times a day shall return to thee, saying, I repent; pardon him.

§ 213. (Matth. xviii. 15–17.)—If you have to reproach one of your brethren in any way, it is your duty to try to reclaim him by soft and persuasive words. Jesus was addressing Jews, and used language appropriate to their necessities. He could not set himself diametrically in opposition to their quarrelsome and rancorous customs all at once; and for this reason he advised them to have recourse first to witnesses, and then to the Church, to settle their differences. But to-day the Master says to you, through us, Blot out your brother's fault by every possible means, and seek to come to a reconciliation with him; but if he persists in his error, call the good spirits who watch over all, as witnesses of his obstinacy. Call them to your aid to restore peace and concord, but beware of proclaiming the wrong-doing of your brother by subjecting him to the judgment of the Church. Firstly, are you quite positive about the fault which he has committed? Are you sure that you have not provoked him, or encouraged him in it, even if you have not caused it, by your impatience or vexation, which has more and more alienated him from the right way? When you went to him, did you act with all needful gentleness and

Digitized by Google

delicacy, so as not to wound his susceptibility, his pride, or even his shame? Have you done all you could to save him from blushing, even to himself? And if you have not done so, are you not afraid of being judged yourself by the judges whom you have asked to sit in judgment on your brother? Dear pupils we say unto you in the name of him who gave this teaching to men, You have advanced, and your feelings ought to advance too. Pardon every offence with sincerity, and hide it from the eyes of strangers lest you should cause your brother to blush; and you will yourselves be pardoned as you have pardoned others.

§ 214. What did Jesus mean (v. 17) by "the Church"?

Speaking generally he referred to enlightened men holding the same opinions. As regards the Apostolic and subsequent ages, he meant an assembly of Christians.

What did Jesus mean by the expressions, "a Gentile and a tax-gatherer"?

A man who is despised and forgotten. Jesus spoke to vindictive men, and it was an immense step gained to induce them to forget and despise injuries by forgetting and despising the man who had offended them.

§ 215. If our brother refuses to hear us in private, is it not better to bring the case before "the Church" for his own good, rather than to leave him to himself?

No; do not forget that everyone has his burden to bear, and his experiences to undergo; and do not attempt to take the mote from your brother's eye in public. Do you not understand that instead of reforming him you run the risk of arousing a resentment in his heart, which will be much worse for him than the offence which he may have committed against you? Do you not comprehend that in such a case you will yourself be responsible for the storm which you have awakened within him?

O never misunderstand your obligations towards one another! You ought to offer your hand, but not to claim your rights by force; you should retain your self-respect,

Digitized by Google

but not allow your heart to freeze; and should therefore always avoid proclaiming the wrongs you have received from your brethren, lest you should compel them to blush in public. First of all, you cause them to deny; and then to try to revenge themselves. This is their human instinct; and you thus urge them on further in the wrong course. A soft word and friendly observation in private will nearly always effect more than all the reproaches (especially in public) which you can heap upon an offender. If you should not succeed, what have you lost? Your efforts have been vain; but they have not resulted in anything which you did not desire; and if your brother is hardened in evil, you are no longer responsible. Offer him your hand with gentleness; plead your cause, but do not make yourselves judges of one another; and never compel anyone to come to terms before the Areopagus.

But are there none in our own times who would not return to truth and right if left to themselves, but might be reclaimed by following the course which Jesus prescribed to the Hebrews?

No; the object would fail; the tendency of the period and the guides of each would aid; but the judgment of all would not further advance these proud and vindictive natures. On the contrary, it would awaken a dumb rage in their hearts, which would lurk there; and would their experiences be more profitable for this? Would it not be better for the common interest that persuasion should act little by little, rather than force compel? And do you know so little of men as to suppose that they would acquiesce sincerely in the will of a majority? Certainly not; and if they are guilty, and forced to do justice by the public voice, they will heartily curse both the judges and the accusers who have brought them to shame before all. Will their experiences be more profitable to them then? Indulgence, pardon, and forgetfulness; such is the judgment of God.

§ 216. What is the exact meaning of the words quoted by Luke xvii. 3, 4?

You should never retain any ill-feeling against your

Digitized by Google

brethren, nor run the risk of such a feeling (however reasonable it may appear), interfering with the sincere repentance of one who has offended you. Moreover, are you not told that you will be judged as you have judged others, and that it will be done to you as you have done to them? You should never forget that it is not seven times a day only, but often seventy times seven times that you offend the Divine Majesty; that you break his laws, and endeavour to evade their action. Be therefore merciful to your brethren, you who have so much need of mercy yourselves, that you may be able to pray sincerely, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us."

§ 217. Do the words "if he repent" in Luke xvii. 3, mean that the offender should not have his pardon declared to him unless he repents?

It is useless to fling pardon at the offender to which he is indifferent. In such a case, keep it in your heart, whence it may flow abundantly when repentance calls it forth.

§ 218. What should we think of the command given to the Hebrews? (Lev. xix. 17.) "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; but rebuke him publicly, lest thou should sin against him."

The advice was appropriate to the period. The gentleness of the law of pardon was harsh, like all the laws of the Hebrews. It had its charitable side by commanding men to be publicly reproved for the faults which they had committed, after due notice given. They were on their guard against this disgrace, and were consequently more accessible to the efforts made to soften them. This fear was more powerful and effective at that period, upon violent, proud, and vindictive men than it would be now. At the present day we say again, Reprove your brother for the faults which you perceive him to have committed; for you may thus enlighten him respecting a wrong which proceeds from ignorance. You may find him on the brink of a precipice, and save him from the fall; but let your advice be fraternal, given in private, and as far as possible indirectly, lest you should shame your brother, and his pride should prevent his profiting by your advice. Be therefore kind and gentle;

Digitized by Google

right wrongs tenderly, but never arm yourself with a scourge.

§ 219. How can we make these words agree with Matth. xviii. 15-17?

Is there not a link which connects the old Law with the new? Could men break all at once with their prejudices and traditions? Jesus spoke to the men of that age in language which they were able to understand; and it was the gradual ascent which was to lead them up towards his gentle morality, always so full of forgiveness. Compare the explanations which we have just given you with the parable of the adulteress; and ask your hearts whether, while reproving your brother, you also do not deserve to be reproved yourselves; and in this case, as in all others, regulate your conduct by the maxim, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

LUKE, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 7-10.

Duty and Humility.

(7) And who among you having a servant ploughing or tending flocks will say to him when he comes from the field, Go and rest immediately? (8) But will not say to him, Make ready that I may dine, and gird yourself and wait upon me, that I may eat and drink; and after these things, you shall eat and drink? (9) Does he thank that servant because he did what was commanded him? I think not. (10) So also you should say, when you have done the things that I have commanded you, We are unprofitable servants, for we have done what it was our duty to do.

§ 220. You are told that you are nothing in the sight of the Lord, and that he has a right to expect all from those to whom all has been given. Do not, therefore, pride yourselves upon what you do in hopes of pleasing him, but try to do your duty, and above all things do not act thus with the hope of reward as your sole motive. You should be actuated solely by the feeling of duty, gratitude towards God, and the hope of pleasing him.

Digitized by Google

LUKE, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 11–19.

The Ten Lepers.

(11) And it came to pass that as he was travelling towards Jerusalem, he went through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. (12) And as he was entering a certain village, there met him ten leprous men, who stood afar off. (13) And they raised their voice, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. (14) And when he saw them, he said, Go and show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass that as they were going away, they were cleansed. (15) And one of them, seeing that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice, (16) And fell on his face at his feet, returning thanks to him. And he was a Samaritan. (17) And Jesus answered and said, Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? (18) There were none found turning back to give thanks to God, save only this stranger. (19) And he said to him, Rise and go thy way; thy faith hath saved thee.

§ 221. This is one fact more to prove that it is not sufficient to be born into any particular religious faith, to act in such a manner as to find favour in the sight of the Lord. Such events were designed by Jesus as a lesson for mankind. Who is he who shows his gratitude? Who is he who gives glory to God for the mercy which he has received? The schismatic who has been rejected as a stranger; and although out of, and opposed to, the Law, his faith has saved him. Never forget this example. Whether you are under the Law or not, you are all sons of the Most High; sons of God; and you all owe him your love and gratitude for every new mercy which he grants you. Act like the Samaritan, and instead of pursuing your way to fulfil a vain outward ceremony, return on your steps; look upon what you were, and what you are; see what the Lord has done for you, and throw yourselves at his feet in an ecstacy of love and gratitude.

The material cure was effected at the moment when Jesus pronounced the words, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." But the lepers did not immediately perceive that the cure had taken place, for Jesus had calculated the effects of the fluids; and it was under spirit-influence that the Samaritan perceived his cure, and was moved by gratitude to retrace his steps. Jesus was still at the spot where they had seen him, and the lepers had not gone very far when the Samaritan turned back.

Digitized by Google

It has been asked, Why did Jesus tell the leper to show himself to the priests, knowing that he was a Samaritan, and that it would be against his conscience to do so?

Those who speak thus neither understand the words of Jesus, nor the thoughts which inspired them. He spoke to the lepers collectively, and not to each of them separately; and thus, in ordering them to show themselves to the priests, he spoke to the Jews, who were bound to fulfil this formality. The Samaritan went with the others, not to go through the ceremony, but to return home; and it was then that his gratitude was manifested.

It has also been said: The nine leprous Jews had faith in Jesus, as well as the Samaritan, and could not better show their gratitude and obedience towards their benefactor, than by punctually fulfilling his orders, and going (without turning back, like the Samaritan) to thank God by fulfilling the commands of the Law.

They possessed faith, but not gratitude. Jesus knew the secret motives which regulated the actions of each of them, and the lesson which would spring from the incident.

It has also been asserted that the Samaritan prostrated himself before Jesus as before a divinity; and that it is not the worship of God which is inculcated, but that of Jesus.

This is another error. If those who regard the subject in this light were to reflect that inferiors are accustomed to prostrate themselves before their superiors in Eastern countries, they would have comprehended the act of the Samaritan, who, while gratefully recognising the mighty power of God, nevertheless owed a debt of gratitude to him whom the Lord deemed worthy to act as an intermediary between himself and men. The obedience of the other lepers would have been just as great if their gratitude had taken precedence of it.

The lepers regarded Jesus as a prophet, and only the instrument of the Lord; and it was to God that the grateful acts of adoration were addressed, and not to the personality of Jesus. If a monarch sends his minister to confer some favour upon you, would not the minister be a link between you and the king, and would not your expressions of gratitude be addressed to him, that he might

Digitized by Google

transmit them to his master? Did not Jesus say, "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? There was none found turning back to give thanks to God, save only this stranger." And did not Jesus always say that he was the messenger of the Father, and that he received everything from him, and could do nothing of himself?

It has also been said that men have been induced, by false interpretations of this event, to supplant the worship of the One God by that of Jesus.

This event contributed to it, and is one of the numerous links in the chain; but the chief link is the title of the Son of God badly interpreted, in connection with the literal interpretation of the words, "My Father."

LUKE, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 20–24.

The Kingdom of God.

(20) And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God doth not come with observation. (21) Nor shall you say, Lo, here, or Lo, there; for behold the kingdom of God is within you. (22) And he said to the disciples, The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and shall not see it, (23) And they shall say to you, Lo, here, or Lo, there, but do not go away, nor follow them. (24) For as the lightning which flashes from the one side under heaven, shines unto the other side under heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be in his day.

§ 222. (V. 20.)—Man bears within him the kingdom of God, for he attains to it by the exercise of his faculties, and by advancing towards moral perfection. "The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation," because man can only hope to attain to human perfection, which alone will lead him to it, by slow and gradual progress from one ascent to another. Thus moral perfection cannot be reached at a bound, but by slow, toilsome, and incessant labour.

(V. 21.)—The kingdom of God is not a limited locality, as men have imagined. It is not a happy abode to which they can obtain admission; but it consists in boundless virtue. The kingdom of God is within you; it is in the midst of you; but you know not how to discover it. It is the

Digitized by Google

communion of purified souls; therefore purify your souls that you may possess the kingdom of God.

(V. 22.)—These words were not spoken to the disciples only, but to the people around, and also, by anticipation, to future generations, who still desire to see the acts of Jesus repeated, that they may see and believe. Has not man often aspired to the holy liberty born of love and charity, and perceived that the only remedy for the evils of humanity is in practising the two great principles which imply the individual and social practice of justice, labour, and fraternity? But man has tried in vain to recall the days when Jesus preached his morality, and set his example to the world. These days have not returned, and you are still awaiting them. You may summon them with all your efforts, but they will yet be very long in coming, for you are not all sufficiently clear-sighted to bear their light, and your surroundings are not yet sufficiently disengaged from the material impulses which are the sources of pride, selfishness, and sensuality, and which prevent you from assimilating yourselves to the morality of the Son of Man. Nor are you yet sufficiently prepared for the new era when the Son of Man shall come among you, and you will see the return of his day.

(V. 23.)—These words apply to the abuses which have been imported into the doctrines of Jesus, and which have used his name and authority to mislead or blind the feeble and credulous. All additions made to the Law are foreign to the Law; and everything which departs from the straight path laid down by Jesus leads astray. Everything contrary to the law of love and charity is an abuse, and so is everything which departs from the law of fraternity, equality, and liberty; for justice, love, and charity are the sources of every duty, and result in the pardon and forgetfulness of offences, and in devotion, liberty of conscience, reason, and free-thought.

(V. 24.)—The Son of Man is the personification of his law and morality. When the time has come, this pure and mild law will divest itself of all the deceitful ornaments in

Digitized by Google

which it has been clothed, and will appear suddenly before the eyes of men in all its purity, and its light will flash like lightning from one side of the horizon to the other; and then the predicted advent of the Son of Man among you will be near.

The deceptive ornaments in which the pure and gentle law of Jesus has been clothed, are all additions of external worship, which detract from spiritual worship; as does also every attempt to materialize the law of Jesus, which can only appeal to the heart and understanding of men. This holy Law will appear suddenly to human eyes in all its purity, when reforms are effected among the ministers of religions. God will provide for this by the needful incarnation of missionary spirits who will lead your humanity to the knowledge of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This reform will lead men to the period when the various external forms of worship which now divide and separate them will disappear, and become fused into one only—the sincere worship of the Father (God, who is one and indivisible) by prayer offered from the heart, and not with the lips only, true spiritual prayer, based on the actions of a life which is upright and pure before the Lord; by spiritual fasting; and by the practice of the love of God above all things, and of the neighbour as oneself. It will lead to love, reverence, and gratitude towards the Son; Jesus, the Protector and Ruler of your planet and its humanity; to whom you owe everything that you are. It will lead to the invocation of God and his Christ for their powerful protection, and for the aid, support, and sympathy of the Holy Spirit; the good spirits of the Lord. Thus this reform will accomplish the words of Jesus: "The time is coming when men shall worship the Father neither on this mountain, nor at Jerusalem." Then men will have become the true worshippers, whom the Father requires, and will worship the Father in spirit and in truth; and all the buildings which you call synagogues, churches, mosques, and temples, will be indifferently places of meeting for prayer and instruction, animated by one common feeling of humility, love, and

Digitized by Google

charity, under the influence and protection of the good spirits; and the most learned, enlightened, and deserving will be unanimously chosen to preside over these assemblies. The universe is the temple of the Lord; we will not anticipate the future.

LUKE, CHAP. XVII.—VERSES 25–36.

Signs of the Second Coming of Jesus.

(25) But it is first necessary for him to suffer many things, and to be rejected by this generation. (26) And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. (27) They ate, they drank, they married, they gave in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. (28) So also was it in the days of Lot: they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they begat children, they built houses, (29) Until the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. (30) Thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. (31) In that day, whoever shall be upon his housetop, and his clothing in the dwelling, let him not go down to fetch it; and he who is in the field, let him likewise not turn back. (32) Remember Lot's wife. (33) Whoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whoever shall lose it shall preserve it. (34) I say unto you in that night there shall be two men in one bed; one shall be taken, and the other left. (35) Two women shall be grinding at the same mill; one shall be taken, and the other left. (36) And they answered and said to him, Where, Lord? And he said to them Wherever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

§ 223. In this passage, the spiritual sense is purposely veiled by the letter. Jesus alludes to the manner of the purification and progress of your planet and its humanity, and to the events which will take place at the time when the law of love and charity will be practised in your world, and will effect the regeneration of the human race.

The language of Jesus was intended to make a deep impression on the minds of the men of that age, and of succeeding generations, and to prepare for the advent of the New Revelation, which should explain the Master's words in spirit and in truth.

(V. 25.)—Before the Law taught by Jesus could become established, it was needful that the lawgiver should seal it with the seal of love; and that generation has rejected it, and still rejects it, for several spirits who were rebellious at

Digitized by Google

the time of his earthly mission are living among you now, and are still rebellious, whereas some few disciples of Jesus follow his steps, though at a great distance, and endeavour to trace them out.

Jesus descended to set men an example of boundless devotion, and it was therefore needful for him to push it to its utmost limits; and what could be a greater sacrifice, in your eyes, than that of your life? The death of Jesus taught you not to attach an exaggerated importance to your earthly existence. But he also showed you by his life that you should not cast it away needlessly, for he apparently endeavoured to save it by flight, and disappeared whenever he was in peril, until the moment when his death was to crown the edifice which his love had constructed.

In speaking thus, we expressed ourselves from the point of human life, and with reference to the beliefs which existed during the earthly mission of Jesus, and which still exist among you. We have revealed his extra-human origin to you; but, notwithstanding this, you must not forget that although Jesus had assumed a body like yours, but not of the same nature, he intended men to believe in his human origin, that he might fulfil the obligations of humanity, and the law of self-preservation, until the end of his mission, by way of teaching and example.

Verses 26–30 are allusions or allegories on the part of Jesus. The carelessness of man overcomes him in his daily habits, and hinders him from perceiving the danger which hangs over his head; for he is absorbed in the interests and cares of material life, and regardless of the progress and the future of his spirit. Since the advent of Jesus, the world has always advanced without much thought for its future. It still walks on the same path, and will follow it for a long time, until men learn to comprehend the mistake which they have made in not pursuing the morality of the Master.

The deluge in the time of Noah was only partial. Your human science has now ascertained that it was only one of the numerous cataclysms which have led your globe from the state of incandescent fluids to its present condition. These

Digitized by Google

successive transformations have taken place according to immutable natural laws, under the spirit-action which overrules the planetary revolutions, and the progressive and ascending course of worlds, humanities, and all the creatures of the Lord. The destruction of Sodom has been explained by science. At that period the world was more incandescent than in your days, and earthquakes often opened fissures from whence issued flaming gases, and sulphurous and bituminous substances. These projectiles were cast up into the air, and fell on the terrified inhabitants. The destruction of Sodom was one of these catastrophes; the city was burned, and its site effaced. When Jesus said, "So shall it be in the days of the Son of Man," he employed a figurative comparison. He alluded to the deluge, and to the destruction of Sodom, because the moment will actually come when every material and carnal spirit will be rejected from your planet, where spirit alone must reign; because the coming of the Son of Man (that is, when the law of love and charity which he personifies shall be practised on your globe) will effect a regeneration of the human species; and those who have loitered behind will be cast forth from your planet, where the Anointed of the Lord will come in due time. But when he comes, the separation of the darnel and the good corn will be completely effected, and the inhabitants of your planet will then have entered upon the spiritual phase. The removal of the darnel will take place in due time, and its commencement is near.

We speak of the spirits who will be allowed to reincarnate themselves on your globe until the final purification; but many spirits who are still more backward and rebellious will be removed sooner. Yes, those spirits who remain recalcitrant until this final period, when their banishment will take place, will be dazzled by the light which will burst suddenly upon their eyes, and will be consumed by the fire of remorse. They will be enabled to understand what they have lost, that they may be filled with a more eager desire to win it back again; and they will one day succeed, for all must attain to perfection. God wills it; it is the immutable

Digitized by Google

law of progress; and although the errant spirits of an inferior order are, as it were, dependent on the planet in which they incarnate themselves, yet it is otherwise with spirits who are wholly disengaged from matter, who are independent, and at liberty to go from one planet to another according to their degree of elevation, and thus to return to the purified planet from which they were expelled during their moral inferiority.

(V. 31, 32.)—Let not material interests predominate over the thought of man when he understands that he ought to think of his spiritual future without delay. When a man desires to advance in spiritual life, he ought not to look back and regret the material wealth which he may have lost. Lot's wife was concerned about the wealth which she had left behind at the scene of the disaster; she lingered, and fell a victim to the delay. According to the tradition in Genesis (xix. 26) she was "changed into a pillar of salt." She was struck by lightning, and then fell down in ashes, which led to the childish notion that she had been changed into a pillar of salt, and melted.

The allegorical expressions in verses 31 and 32 were designed to make an impression on the contemporaries of Jesus, and on succeeding generations. He addressed them specially to you, and to those who shall come after you; for the time is approaching when the purification of your earth must begin. The first signs of the coming of the Son of Man, and the law of love and charity which he personifies, are beginning to appear on the horizon of your planet. Think of your souls, and do not allow yourselves to be wholly absorbed by the interests, cares, and passions of material life, but be filled with zeal and anxiety for your moral and intellectual progress, and for the future of your spirit, as well as for the progress and the future of your brethren.

(V. 33.)—He who lives only for the present, and concentrates all his efforts on the preservation of his corporeal existence, will at length reach the term of his natural life, and lose it. But as he has been more careful of material

Digitized by Google

interests than of the salvation of his soul, he will have to begin again, and will find the life which he has lost opening before him the path which he must follow to win the prize. He who seeks to save his (spiritual) life, will lose his corporeal life; but will find the eternal life beyond the tomb. But in losing a life to which he was less attached, because he had occupied himself specially with the progress of the soul, he will gain the life to which he aspired.

This is the general rule. It has been thus in all ages, for all, according to the immutable laws of expiation, reparation, progress, and reincarnation, which is the holy ladder which every fallen spirit must ascend to purify himself, and afterwards to rise to the moral perfection which will lead him to God.

In the allegorical expressions of this verse, Jesus alluded to those spirits now incarnated who will still remain backward and rebellious at the time of the purification of your planet, but who will be permitted to reincarnate themselves upon it until then. But at this time they will be removed, and obliged to reincarnate themselves on the inferior planets, where they must begin again, and where they will find again the corporeal life which they had lost. And these also, when they have striven to save their spiritual life, after having lost their corporeal life, will find the eternal life to which they aspired opening before them after death.

(V. 34, 35.)—All will not have arrived at the same degree of advancement at the time of the purification of your planet, and therefore cannot be admitted to the same existence. There will be a choice to be made in all human conditions; and it is to this that Jesus alluded allegorically, relative to the spirits who will be permitted to incarnate themselves upon your earth, when the darnel shall be separated from the good corn.

(V. 36, 37.)—Jesus replied evasively to the Apostles and disciples, who were not intended to comprehend the spiritual meaning of what the Master said; and they understood him to mean that he did not wish to specify the place. Jesus spoke thus from the same motive which led him to speak in

Digitized by Google

emblematic figures which would apply to the present and the future. He spoke of your planet, which is subject to his direction. His answer to his disciples implies that the surface of the globe will witness the revolution which his veiled words were intended to announce.

The words, "Wheresoever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together," signify that progress must extend over every part of your planet, that the planet itself may progress. Consequently, wherever humanity exists on your planet there will be progress and change, amounting to a physical, moral, and intellectual transformation. It will be physical, as affecting the bodies which will pass to the fluidic state by less and less material stages, like the planet itself. It will be moral and intellectual, as affecting the spirits who must accomplish the needful purification, wherever there are faults, and who will be punished by expiations in the errant state, and successive reincarnations, until the darnel has been separated from the wheat; and wherever this purification shall be accomplished, there will the purified spirits assemble.

What Jesus said of your planet, also applies as a general law to all the planets which have arisen, like yours, from incandescent fluids, and which must follow the same progressive and ascending course. As we have already explained (§ 56 and foll.), these planets serve both for the development of the primitive spiritual essences, until the period preparatory to humanity; and also for the incarnations of formed spirits who have fallen, whose incarnations take place according to their degree of guilt, and under the conditions required for their progress, either as primitive incarnations on a planet where man has not previously existed, or upon a planet which has already suffered progress and change, since his appearance.

§ 224. Why are the fossil remains of man so rare, considering that many partial planetary revolutions have taken place since his first appearance on the earth?*

Man was not a witness of all the cataclysms which have

* This question was asked in December, 1864.

Digitized by Google

revolutionized your globe. Many took place before he appeared upon it. Besides, the human skeleton is not so massive as those of the animals which were contemporaneous with his first appearance, and consequently his remains are more rare. Scientific discoveries will become more numerous, when excavations are carried out more extensively. We have nothing to say about this, for it is not our province to give you a course of natural history here.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 18–20.

Binding and Loosing.—Presence of Christ.

(18) Verily I say unto you, that whatever you shall have bound on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (19) Again I say to you that if two of you shall be agreed on earth concerning anything which you shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father in the heavens. (20) For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them.

§ 225. (v. 18)—We have already explained what is meant by the power of loosing and binding which Jesus declared his disciples should possess. The disciples were enlightened already, and were to become more so when they had received full light within the limits of their earthly mission. They themselves were elevated, and were also inspired and guided by superior spirits, and were consequently fitted to judge with wisdom and certainty of the morality of human sentiments. Do you not find Peter convicting Ananias of a fraud, of which he had been mysteriously informed (as a clairaudient medium) by the superior spirits? He was thus enabled to judge with certainty.*

The perspicacity of the Apostles was the result of their personal elevation, and of the counsels which they received from their spirit-guides; for they were all inspired and clairaudient mediums. But Jesus did not say, "I tell you that all that your descendants shall bind on earth from age to age shall be bound in heaven; and all that they shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The Master

* Acts v. 1–10.

Digitized by Google

spoke to the Apostles, and not to their degenerate successors. There have been some among their successors (Jews and Gentiles, independently of all outward forms of worship), and there are still some among you, though very few, whose holiness and medianimic faculties enable them to bind and loose in the true sense of these words, with the aid of their spirit-guides.

(V. 19, 20.)—Jesus addressed these words to pious men, all whose thoughts and aspirations were directed towards heaven; and he therefore spoke in reference to celestial blessings, and not of the contemptible interests of your humanity. He promised those who were assembled in his name that whatever they should ask would be granted by God. Have you had no experience of this?

But God will not listen favourably to the prayers which are addressed to him, unless they are uttered, not merely with the lips, but with deep and holy feeling. Let those who ask do so with ardent confidence that they will be heard. It is needless to add that the object sought must be just and holy.

Many will say, "We have prayed earnestly, and fulfilled all these conditions, but we have not been heard." But do you know whether your request was right and fitting? Do you know whether what you prayed for so earnestly might not be injurious to you? How do you know that your Father has not reserved for the eternal life what you asked as a temporal favour?

(V. 20.)—Jesus promised that he would be in the midst of those who assembled in his name. Therefore, whether two or three are assembled together, or whether you are a thousand, the Lord draws near to you, and his ear is opened to your prayers; but for this, it is requisite that you should really be gathered together in his name, with the desire of following his law, and mutually animated by the love of God above all things, and of your neighbour as yourselves.

You know the attractive influence of the sympathetic fluids, which are the links which attract spirits to each

Digitized by Google

other, who, if not always of the same order, are at least animated by the same sentiments, tastes, and desires. These fluids are drawn together by analogy of kind and nature, which establishes mutual relationships among spirits. When men who are animated by the same thoughts concur in the same work, they meet together, and the sympathies which they attract gather round them. It is thus that vain and frivolous spirits frequent the meetings of vain and frivolous men. If, then, you are closely united by the love of God, and assemble to beseech his mercies; and if you form a more compact and sympathetic chain, he whose protection you seek will respond to your appeal, in the sense that his emissaries will surround you, and pour upon you the treasures of his love for which you pray. But you must not suppose that it is needful for you to assemble at one place to call down upon you the blessings of the Lord. Alas! men who are animated with just and true sentiments of love are so rare, that if only a few men are assembled, there are always some among them who are either indifferent or unworthy; but the Lord counts his sheep, and his faithful ones are dear to him.

§ 226. The Roman Church explains v. 20 from different points of view. Firstly, she claims to possess the genuine interpretation of the sacred writings. It is said, "What reverence is not due to the councils where the whole Church is assembled in her ministers, for enlightenment and truth, the reformation of morals, the establishment of discipline, and the interpretation of the sacred writings! Those are blind indeed who prefer their own opinions to those of these assembled saints."— While I was still speaking, I was suddenly interrupted, and the hand of the medium wrote the following reply.

We stop you here. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Jesus knew how difficult it is to assemble a larger number of men animated by the same spirit and sentiments. You have but to ask the Church in what council a single religious question has been unanimously accepted without discussion, and often bitter controversy. If, then, in councils composed of men of God, whose judgments were infallible, opinions were divided, and if the members of these same councils maintain their opinions even in the face of a

Digitized by Google

triumphant majority, what were the influences which guided the members of the sacred college? If opinions were controverted in the councils, how can you distinguish between those inspired by the Holy Spirit and those inspired by Satan? What is the verdict of human wisdom and experience? Let them answer you, and state the reason themselves. Now continue your remarks.

It is added, The Church alone possesses the truth; she alone, assembled in council, is infallible, being alone assisted and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Reply to the Church: God alone is infallible; your ministers, whether isolated or assembled in council, are fallible like other men, and are likewise subject to the good influences which flow from the Holy Spirit, and to the evil influences proceeding from Satan. Thus they attract to themselves good or evil influences similar in their natures to their sentiments, thoughts, and desires. If you had been infallible through your ministers assembled in the councils, who were aided and inspired by the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their judgments, there would have been unity among them, and unanimity in their decisions, which would all have borne the stamp of charity, tolerance, and universal love. Do not assert that infallibility rests with the majority in your councils. How can you prove it? Has it not been the minority among you which has walked in the steps of the Master who gave you his example, not by words, but by thoughts and actions of gentleness, humility, disinterestedness, frugality, temperance, sobriety, chastity, patience, resignation, charity, and love towards all? Ask yourselves where are the majorities of the men who compose your councils, who have set an example of self-denial and devotion like the Apostles and their first followers? What examples have they set of tolerance and fraternity, embracing all men equally, whether Jews or Gentiles (apart from all external forms of worship), in the bonds of universal brotherhood, and proclaiming to all, from the bottom of their hearts, "We have but one Father in the heavens; we have but one Master and Teacher, the Christ, and we are all brethren."

Digitized by Google

Is it not the majorities in your councils who exhibit pride, ambition, fanaticism, intolerance; often selfishness, and sometimes even incredulity? Was it, then, the Holy Spirit (the good spirits of light and truth) who aided and inspired them, and presided over their councils, or was it Satan (the evil spirits of error and lying)?

In the second place, they endeavour to frighten men away from the Spiritual Revelation by saying that Satan alone has the power to communicate medianimically.

Do not allow yourselves to be stopped by these interested and monstrous misrepresentations. They arise either from ignorance or dishonesty, and give the lie to the historical traditions of events which have taken place in all ages, and among all nations, and to the successive revelations which the Lord has sent you. Has not the law of magnetic attraction existed from all eternity, in the spiritual as well as in the material universe? Is it not according to the attractive influence of sympathetic fluids that there has been communion between the errant and incarnate spirits in all ages? Is it not thus that errant and incarnate spirits are still drawn together, when they are animated by the same sentiments and desires? Is it not in consequence of the mutual attractions existing between these fluids, according to their various natures, and according as their sentiments and desires are good or evil, that incarnate spirits attract to themselves the secret inspirations of good or evil spirits, or the open influences of medianimic communications? Have not communications between the spiritual and natural worlds, and secret or open medianimic action always existed? Have not these been the means of all revelations among men? Have they not, even from the most remote antiquity, inspired men with the idea of their spiritual origin, and their ideas of the immortality of the soul, and of the Divinity? Have they not led men who were subject to good or evil influences in consequence of their moral position, to the polytheistic ideas which paved the way to monotheism, and which led men to make gods of all the virtues, as well as of all the passions and vices? Have they not been

Digitized by Google

useful in preparing the Gentiles, with the aid of missionary spirits, for an enlightened belief in the immortality of the soul, the divine unity, monotheism, and reincarnation? Was it not to establish this belief in monotheism among the Hebrews, with whom it was to be deposited, and transmitted to future generations; and to preserve these backward and superstitious people from being misled by the inferior and impure spirits around them, that Moses forbade them to consult the dead, and to seek the truth from them? And did not Moses and the prophets after him, who were commissioned to establish the new era of monotheism, communicate medianimically either openly, or by inspiration, with the Holy Spirit (the good and superior spirits), who aided, inspired, and guided them in the name of the Lord?

The communication between the spiritual and corporeal worlds has existed in all ages, and in all places, before Moses came to accomplish his mission, and before the Catholic Church had published its doctrine of the Fall of the Angels, and of Satan, and consequently of eternal damnation. Has not this communication been continued until your own days? Do you not find sign-posts erected in the course of ages, which tell you, "Stop here. You will find traces of facts identical with those which surprise you. If you search, you will find many others, although the stake, the torture-chamber and the dungeon have hid many from the knowledge of men." Has not the Church drawn from the communication between the two worlds the elements of her canonization of those within her pale, who were not placed beyond her dogmatic teachings and human commands by the medianimic influence? And has not this communication given the Inquisition an excuse for inflicting torture and death on those whom this influence appeared to place outside the Church?

Spiritism is an immutable law established by God from all eternity, and is not essentially a new revelation, viewed as a communication between the two worlds. It is not a mystery newly offered to your acceptance; but it is only an extension given to your days of what has been given before.

Digitized by Google

It is the liberty of conscience which you enjoy which has permitted facts which were previously stifled to be grouped together to fix your attention. The more frequent communication between free and imprisoned spirits is not a new revelation; for the revelation which Spiritism brings you is not new in essence, but in the explanations which it offers you in spirit and in truth of your origin, your goal, and the means of attaining it.

If you deny the open or occult medianimic action of the Holy Spirit upon men (the action of the good spirits of light and virtue), and their mutual intercourse, and deny all communication between the spiritual and corporeal worlds except that of Satan (the evil spirits of error and lying), you reject the whole past of humanity; the traditions of all ages and nations; all the events which they have recorded; all the revelations which have been successively given to men; the Old and New Testaments, and the narratives which they contain of spirit-manifestations; and the communications between angels (good and purified spirits) with men.

Was it not by a spirit-manifestation that God delivered the tables of the law, containing the Decalogue, to Moses on Mount Sinai?* Was it not through spirit-manifestations, involving communication between the two worlds, that the Messiah was announced to Abraham; and afterwards to the Hebrews by the prophets of Israel, who were inspired and clairaudient mediums, the unconscious instruments of the spirits of the Lord. Was it not thus that Jesus, a pure and perfect spirit, incarnated visibly to human eyes, brought to men through his earthly mission, the good news, the law of love, the regenerating doctrine which was not his own, but His that sent him; the veiled revelation; the veiled prophecies respecting the future of your planet and its humanity; and his promises of the advent of the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit; and of the Spirit of Truth; and consequently of spiritual

* Compare the explanations concerning the Ten Commandments, at the end of the work.

Digitized by Google

communications from the good and purified spirits at the time appointed by the Lord? The signs of this communication have appeared already, and will extend in future over the whole earth.

To deny the secret or open influence of the Holy Spirit (the good spirits of light and truth) upon men, and to admit no communication between the two worlds except that of Satan (the evil spirits of error and lying), is an insult to the justice, goodness, and mercy of God. It is to deny his infinite wisdom, his providence, and its operation among mankind by involving the denial of the immutable law of progress which governs the whole universe, of which the law of suffering and expiation is only the necessary means which your humanity requires in its present stage of moral inferiority.

Thirdly, it is said, "If good spirits can communicate with men, evil spirits can do so likewise. Human reason is fallible, and is therefore incapable of distinguishing with certainty between the errors and lies contained in medianimic communications, and the truth. It is consequently impossible to tell whether this communication between the two worlds is the work of truth, or of error and lying; and it is therefore impossible for man to distinguish with certainty whether the spirit who communicates is the organ of the Holy Spirit or of Satan."

This objection casts equal uncertainty upon the decisions of councils which profess to be under the Holy Spirit; for the moment that there ceased to be unanimity between all the assembled members of the Church, a double influence must have been at work. Which of these was the good influence? That is the question to decide.

There is an infallible criterion for the inspirations of the Church as well as for those of mediums. Conscience, enlightened by Reason, is the true witness of God among men. Search the histories of the Popes and Councils, and examine their decisions, and the feelings of self-denial, disinterestedness, and universal love by which they have been actuated. When you have found them, you may say, "This has really emanated from the Holy Spirit." You can apply the same touchstone to private communications. Wherever you meet with love and charity casting down pride, avarice, and

Digitized by Google

ambition (the vices which lead to quarrels and heartburnings among mankind), you may say, "This proceeds from the good spirits of the Lord. The mediums were inspired by the Holy Spirit." There is also an infallible criterion in the spiritual order, by which you can investigate the truths of the other world which have been spiritually revealed to you, just as in the case of the truths which present themselves in the scientific order of human science. It is the conscience, under the control of reason, which assures the ultimate triumph of all truth, and the condemnation of everything false and erroneous, in the course of discussion, time, and the progress of intelligence. You should never forget the words of Simeon (Luke ii. 34), concerning Jesus, who is the Light of the World, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Christ of God, and the Spirit of Truth, as being the personification, completion, and sanctification of the Truth.

Revelations are successive and progressive. Each of them explains and develops that which has preceded it, and is explained and developed by that which succeeds it. Each is always appropriate to the state of intelligence and the needs of the age, and is sent by the will of God, in His infinite wisdom and foresight, to lead your humanity along the ascending path of progress. Under the old Law, Moses and the prophets were inspired, clairaudient and clairvoyant mediums, according to the conditions and necessities of their missions. The revelation brought by Christ was carried on by the Apostles and disciples, who were inspired, clairaudient and clairvoyant mediums, according likewise to the conditions and necessities of the mission which they had to fulfil in the great work of the regeneration of humanity. Thus, in your own days, the revelation which we bring you in the name of the Spirit of Truth, will be carried on in future by sincere and faithful mediums who will receive light and truth medianimically, and diffuse them among mankind. God leaves nothing to chance, and everything is prepared beforehand for the needful incarnations.

The spiritual truths which are revealed will be disputed like every new truth which is proclaimed to men. But this

Digitized by Google

contradiction will result in their definite triumph, with the progress of time and intelligence, as is always the case under the incessant and progressive action of your physical, mental, and moral development. You will be aided in your task by the open or secret influence of purified spirits, who will labour at your progress under the direction of the Master, both by inspiration and by medianimic communications. You will also be aided by spirits who will incarnate themselves among you on a mission to defend these truths, and to lead men to recognize them by liberty of conscience, reason, and examination, which is the freedom of the Lord. This freedom implies the free use of your reason, the knowledge of causes and effects, the application of knowledge, and the progressive advance of all, in simplicity of heart, humility of mind, disinterestedness, and the desire of progress, guided only by the love of God and the neighbour.

Finally, it has been said, "You should abstain from all communication with the spirit world, and from all medianimic communications, and depend upon the revelations given by Moses and Jesus, and the interpretations which the Church has given of them; and you should reject the spiritual revelation."

Did the revelation given by Moses interfere with the many prophets who rose up in Israel, who were missionary spirits and mediums inspired and guided by the spirits of the Lord whose object was to lead the Israelites to pure beliefs, and to free them from the bonds which tradition and the ambition of the Levites had cast around them? Has not the second revelation which you accepted because it was foretold in the Old Testament, also proclaimed that it did not speak the last word to men, because their intelligence was not able to receive it? Have there not arisen for eighteen hundred years prophets like those of Israel, crying anathema against the heresies which have been introduced into the pure and simple Gospel of Jesus? Was there not a contest between the messengers who preached the pure law, and desired to restore it, and those who had falsified it, and wished to uphold the falsification by material

Digitized by Google

practices, and human doctrines and commandments? And can you not perceive the signs of your own times? By the second revelation Jesus foretold that at the time of the end of the world, the stars should fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens should be shaken. He promised men that their Father should send them in his name the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, to teach them all things, and to bring all that he has said to their remembrance; but that the Spirit of Truth would not speak of himself, but should speak what he had heard, and that he should announce to them things to come; and that the Spirit of Truth should glorify him.

The promised time has come; do you not perceive the spirits of the Lord (the Powers of the Heavens which are shaken, and the stars which fall from heaven on all parts of your planet at once; the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth) coming to prepare and to accomplish the end of the world of error and lying; to glorify Jesus, and to remind you of all that he has said by explaining and developing it in spirit and in truth; to teach you progressively all truth, and to announce to you things to come? The third revelation thus brought to you by us, the Spirits of the Lord who are sent by the Father in the name of Jesus, is given to you in proportion as you are able to bear it, and will be given to you in future as you become able to bear more. Do not suppose that you have yet received the full revelation. The spirits of the Lord have come to prepare for the advent of Jesus among you, when you shall be able and worthy to receive him who shall come to show you the *unveiled* truth, of which he, the Spirit of Truth, is the completion and sanctification.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 21–35.

Pardon of Injuries.

(21) Then Peter came to him, and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? up to seven times? (22) And Jesus said to him, I say not to thee up to seven times, but to seventy times seven. (23) Therefore shall the kingdom of the heavens be

Digitized by Google

likened unto a king, who desired to take account with his servants. (24) And when he had begun to reckon, there was brought to him a man who owed him ten thousand talents. (25) And as he was unable to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. (26) The servant therefore fell down and did homage to him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. (27) And the lord of that servant had compassion on him, and released him, and remitted him the loan. (28) But this servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred denarii, and he seized and choked him, saying, Pay me what thou owest. (29) Then his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. (30) And he would not, but went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the debt. (31) And when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were much grieved, and went and informed their lord of all that had happened. (32) Then his lord called for him, and said to him, O wicked servant, I remitted to thee all that debt when thou besoughtest me. (33) Should not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? (34) And his lord was angry, and gave him over to the torturers, until he should pay all that was owing to him. (35) So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if each of you do not from your hearts forgive his brother his transgressions.

§ 227. Never call the offender to account, but be always ready to forgive him, whatever may have been his errors. Let your indulgence be unbounded. Never forget that the Lord will judge you by the same standard that you have judged your brethren. Therefore, absolve them from their debt by giving them time to pay it, as the Lord has done. Do not forget that you who have been offended, or to whom some obligation is due, have also offended your Father, and owe him vastly more than anything that can be due to yourselves. Therefore, if you wish him to be merciful to you, be merciful to others; if you would be forgiven, forgive; and never cease to repeat from the bottom of your hearts that great saying which forms the key to all teachings, "Never do to another what you would not have done to yourself," and its corollary, "but, on the contrary, do unto others whatever you would wish to be done to yourself." All the devotion of fraternal love is comprised in these few words.

Jesus had recourse to a parable which was appropriate to the manners and intelligence of the age, to impress the masses forcibly with the necessity of pardoning offences, and the consequences, purposely veiled under a material form, of

Digitized by Google

the neglect or refusal to pardon. If you do not forgive the errors of your brethren, but make them feel the full weight of your anger, the Lord is a wise judge who will hold you responsible, and his indulgence will not be extended to him who has been wanting in mercy. You may be sure that the neglect or refusal to pardon offences arises from selfishness and coldheartedness which often springs from pride; and these vices are powerful roots which chain you down to the flesh. Use all your efforts to extirpate them, for they are the cause of expiations and reincarnations, and are an obstacle to the spirit rising from the inferior worlds, as long as he is incapable of always and unceasingly pardoning his brother.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 1–9. MARK, CHAP. X.—VERSES 1–9.

The Law of Marriage.

Matth. xix. (1) And it came to pass that when Jesus had ended these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the boundaries of Judæa beyond Jordan. (2) And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. (3) And the Pharisees came to him, tempting him, and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every reason? (4) And he answered and said to them, Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female? (5) And said, Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. (6) So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has united, let not man divide. (7) They say to him, Why then did Moses command to give her a writing of divorcement, and send her away? He saith to them, (8) Moses for the hardness of your hearts permitted you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. (9) And I say to you that whoever shall put away his wife, except on account of fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery, and whoever shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery.

Mark x. (1) And he rose up from thence, and came into the coasts of Judæa, through the country beyond Jordan, and again multitudes travelled to him, and, as he was accustomed, he taught them again. (2) And the Pharisees came to him, asking him if it was lawful for a man to put away his wife; tempting him. (3) And he answered and said to them, What did Moses command you? (4) And they say, Moses commanded that a certificate of divorcement should be written, and she should be put away. (5) And Jesus answered and said to them, He wrote you this order on account of the hardness of your hearts. (6) But from the beginning of the Creation, God made them male and female. (7) Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. (8) So they are no longer two, but one flesh. (9) Therefore what God hath united, let not man divide.

Digitized by Google

§ 228. You may here refer to vol. i. § 84, pp. 211 and 212. In replying to the Pharisees, Jesus explained, as a veiled lesson for men, the union of man and woman both as regards the divine law, and the civil, or human law; and added, "What God hath united, let not man divide." These words were useful for the present and preparatory to the future. Their accomplishment was only designed to take place as the result of the moral purification of your humanity. They are still sayings of the future to yourselves. The influences of civilization and progress have prepared you for this work of moral purification. Progress has taken place slowly and painfully, but still there has been progress; and the time is approaching, though still distant, when man shall no longer divide what God has joined.

You know that every revelation is appropriate to the state of intelligence and the needs of the age, its object and result being to serve the present, and to prepare for the future; and the veil which covers each of them is designed to be progressively raised by the following revelations; for your humanity continues to receive what it is able to bear, in proportion to the development of your moral and intellectual progress, until the day when Jesus will himself come to show you the unveiled Truth.

We have already (§ 55, p. 104 and foll.) glanced at the emblematic character of the Creation as recorded in Genesis. The formation of man and woman by the hands of the Creator, like a clay statue moulded by a potter, is only an emblem. It had no other meaning except to prefigure the intimate union of the male and female, which were created two only in order that they should not be separated. Moses knew the mysterious origin of the soul by intuition and medianimic revelations. He was inspired and guided by superior spirits who revealed to him under a veil what he knew of the origin of man. By representing man and woman as issuing from the hands of their Creator, he gave a greater importance both to the work and to its fall, and opened a vast horizon to the desire for improvement. By saying that God created man in his own image, and created

Digitized by Google

them male and female, he raised man and woman in their own eyes; and gave them the desire for good, and the knowledge of what they might become. He was acquainted with the origin of the soul, which proceeds from the universal principle at the will of the Lord, and is destined by continual progress to acquire a degree of purity which assimilates it, in a sense, to its Creator.

When Jesus quoted the emblematic expressions of Genesis, and added, "Therefore they are no longer two, but one flesh: what God hath united, let not man divide;" he showed men the indivisible character which, according to the divine law, should rule over the union of man and woman to fulfil their pilgrimage through the earth together, united in body and soul, and to fulfil all the duties which this union brings with it. The divine law is not material only; it is also moral. As regards human nature, marriage is nothing more than the union of two bodies for the purpose of reproduction. Therefore let men keep themselves pure while submitting to the laws of their animal nature, and the justice of God will preserve them. But side by side with the divine law in the material world, is the divine law in the moral order; the law of love which you see working and developing, according to the immutable law of progress in all the kingdoms of nature. In the animal kingdom you see the law of love acting at first promiscuously, and then in some species exhibiting preliminary signs of the intimate union of bodies and souls; and thus leading towards the accomplishment of the emblematic words of Genesis, relative to man and woman.

Let the union of man and woman among you be at once free and indissoluble, according to the true spiritual sense of the expressions which Jesus quoted. Let it be both free and indissoluble according to the natural law in the sight of God, by the indissoluble union of bodies and minds. Let it freely bear the fruits of justice and chastity, under the influence and practice of the law of love, between two independent, free, and responsible creatures, in the fulfilment of all conjugal and parental duties towards spirits who will come to incarnate themselves, and to fulfil new experiences.

Digitized by Google

We now proceed to consider the question of the Pharisees respecting divorce, and the reply of Jesus.

When the need of establishing societies began to be felt, and pastoral nations originated, the multiplicity of children became a source of wealth; and the barren woman was persecuted, or even destroyed. On account of the abuses to which the necessities of population had given rise, Moses legalized divorce, although the same reasons for rapid increase had already ceased to exist at that period. But men, proud in everything, had come to regard the number of their children as a personal merit of their own; and the barren woman was therefore exposed to every kind of ill-treatment. It was needful to avoid the immorality to which the abuse of the law of divorce led; for men believed that they had a right to take a wife, and desert her when they were tired of her. To prevent this, Jesus gave the law of adultery a wider significance (Matth. xix. 9).

Even in your days, when you are civilized, but not purified, would not unlimited freedom of divorce be a cover for immorality, and for legalized corruption of morals? Christ, by commanding that man should not separate what God had united, struck at the roots of the abuses prevalent at the time, and imposed a limit on the corruption of future ages; but he did not condemn two antipathetic spirits to torture each other.

It is contrary to the divine law to compel two such spirits to consort with each other daily; but this must not be taken as an excuse for misconduct, for it is in accordance with the words of Jesus. Jesus said, "What God has united, let not man divide;" but he did not say, "Compel those to live together who cannot approach each other without a mutual aversion which leads them into faults contrary to the law of charity." Divorce could only exist before the Lord when one of two antipathetic spirits leads the other into evil, by word and example; for this is adultery, in the moral order. The bodies of men and women are nothing in the eyes of the Lord, for God made man and woman from a spiritual, and not from a corporeal, point of view. The body is only the instrument given to the spirit for its earthly

Digitized by Google

experiences in the path of reparation and progress; and it is therefore the spirit that men and women should preserve unstained. Does not the adulterous man or woman lead the spirit united with them to commit the same fault; whether it is adultery of the body through abuse of the flesh, or adultery of the spirit by failing in the law of justice, love, and charity, by word and example? Is it not better to separate the branch from the tree than to allow it to bear evil fruit? Remember that marriage among yourselves frequently loses all the sacred character which it ought to possess, and becomes nothing more than the fulfilment of a business contract, in which the two parties are more or less scrupulous in the fulfilment of their obligations.

Civil laws have followed the mission of Jesus, like those given by Moses to the Hebrew nation. They have varied in their nature, like everything in the moral and intellectual order which emanates from your imperfect humanity, according to the time, the place, and the intelligence of the age. They are designed to prevent, to repress, or to remedy abuses, and to lead you forward. Progress advances, in spite of oscillations or reactionary opposition, under the influence and guidance of successive revelations, and by the secret or open impulse of the Spirits of the Lord (the Providence of God among you) and of the spirits incarnated on missions.

The civil laws of divorce and marriage arose from your social renovation of 1789, which was one of the greatest efforts of your humanity in the path of progress; and they have lasted till your own days. They have undergone variations due to the incessant struggle between progressive and reactionary influences; but the law of progress is immutable, like everything which proceeds from God. The law of marriage needs to be deeply considered, and reconstructed according to the natural law of God; but before this, it is needful that the passions and cupidity of men shall have given place to higher feelings. It is needful that the union of man and woman should be understood to be a great and holy thing in the eyes of the Lord; and that men should understand the vastness of the duties which they are

Digitized by Google

bound to fulfil when they take upon themselves the responsibilities of marriage; duties which they are not permitted to fail in, and which God protects with his love; for it is the consecration of the laws of nature. But society is still too much entrammelled by prejudices, abuses, and vices for this reform to take place. It must be the work of time and progress; every day brings its grain of sand to add to the preceding; and each grain of sand will at length set an impenetrable barrier to the vices of humanity. But you must wait till the wall is built, and not risk the destruction of the good that has already been attained, by building too fast. Men, return to what you ought to be, the children of the Lord; and then man will no longer divide what God has united. Yes, that which Moses announced, under a veil, in the name of the Lord, "and they twain shall be one flesh," must be and shall be fulfilled; and Christ sanctified these words by saying, "Therefore they are no longer two, but one flesh. What God hath united, let not man divide." Marriage should take place, as the consequence and result of your moral purification, under spiritual influence; a free choice, freely accepted in the sight of God, and freely maintained, until the death of one of the parties; a mutual agreement and aid which nothing can dissolve; a support in the experiences of life, with the fixed desire of maintaining it when it has been interrupted on earth, in the errant state, and in that life which lies before you in the future, where, as Jesus said, "there is no longer husband or wife;" for the union contracted on earth is a powerful bond which eternally unites those who have formed it by a sympathy which nothing can alter.

The religious benediction was long the only form of consecration of marriage; and it will still be so. In ancient times, before the advent of Moses, the appeal to the blessing of God was made by the parents, and the betrothed couple. In the Hebrew times, from the advent of Moses, to the appearance of Jesus on earth, a patriarchal formula had been already established, and the religious benediction took a more definite form. Was it not fitting to feast the relations and friends? and the ostentation of brilliant weddings began.

Digitized by Google

After the advent of Christ, and during the early ages of Christianity, the nuptial benediction took a more religious character. The priest began by invoking the blessings of the Father of all on the young couple; but, little by little, this custom degenerated into a mere form. The lively faith which brought to the Church all who were interested in the pair, that they might unite in more earnest prayer, gave place to the thirst for show, and the pride of luxury and ostentation which corrupts all the sentiments of humanity. Weddings became occasions of feasting and rejoicing; and men no longer cared for the sympathy of the guests, and the fervent prayers which they offered up to the Protector of the weak. They invited the happy, and counted the number of guests; and the blessing of the priest became only a necessary formality.

The period upon which you are about to enter, though still far distant, will lead up to the time when, before God, in the silence of nature, and the sincerity of his conscience, man will invoke on himself and his companion the blessings of the Lord, humbly asking for strength to bear their trials courageously, and for strength and intelligence to elevate the children whom they may be called upon to introduce to life, morally still more than materially. But there will be no noise or feasting; only the prayers of parents and chosen friends: silence and darkness, purity of heart, and hope in God. Then the union of man and woman will be according to the law of God, both free and indissoluble by the divine link of the law of love.

O men, so proud of your civilization, how corrupt is your society, and how few of the merits which you attribute to it does it possess! It is a mummy, loaded with golden relics, hiding its shame and rottenness under robes of silk and satin. Yet it must still remain thus for a long time; for your humanity must be led on by slow degrees to the point of moral purification when the purified spirit will have no need of restraints, because he will seek for the companion who is suited to him, and, guided by love and charity, will not cast her off from mere caprice.

Digitized by Google

§ 229. How should Spiritists act if the religious benediction according to the outward worship in which they were born should be refused to them?

Why do you need men to call down upon your heads the religious benediction which they refuse to you? Render homage to the Creator, and implore him to bestow his blessing upon you. You are surrounded by *Levites;* good spirits, and divine messengers ready to bless you in the name of God. As we have told you, marriage, according to the natural law of God, and apart from all religious formalism, consists in free accord, freely accepted and maintained until the death of one of the parties, in the union of bodies and souls, for the performance of the law of love and charity, and the fulfilment of all the duties which it imposes, as between man and woman, and also with regard to the children whom they may be called upon to usher into life. But you should always avoid scandal, although your actions are not judged by your Father as by yourselves; and conform yourselves, so far as is humanly possible, to the laws under which you live, both as regards the religious benediction, and the civil regulations respecting marriage. You may always be sure that these laws will be modified when your natures are modified; but endeavour at once to practise the natural law of God, by a union which shall be both free and indissoluble; and thus obey the natural law before the moral purification of your humanity has established its dominion; and await its maturity. If blindness and intolerance should lead men to refuse you their religious benediction, show them that the words of Jesus are fulfilled in you, "They are no longer two but one flesh; what God hath united, let not man divide." Do this by the blessing which you shall have brought down from your Creator, which shall be given to you in his name by the good spirits who surround you, and practise marriage in accordance with the natural law of God.

If you should be obliged to set this example, after having done all that was humanly possible to avoid scandal, it will be as a lamp set to illumine the course of your humanity in

Digitized by Google

the future path which will see the accomplishment of the Master's words, which we have just explained in spirit and in truth.

MARK, CHAP. X.—VERSES 10–12. MATTHEW, CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 10–12.

The Conditions of Marriage.

Mark x. (10) And in the house, his disciples asked him again about this. (11) And he said to them, Whoever shall divorce his wife and marry another, committeth adultery on account of her. (12) And if a woman shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery.

Matth. xix. (10) His disciples say to him, If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry. (11) And he said to them, All cannot receive this saying, but those to whom it is given. (12) For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs on account of the kingdom of the heavens. He who is able to receive it, let him receive it.

§ 230. The answer of Jesus to the Pharisees, respecting the divine law of the union of man and woman, had made an impression on the minds of the disciples; and as soon as they were alone with him, they questioned him again on the subject.

Jesus alluded, in thought, to that period of progress and moral purification when human laws will be modified, because your natures will be modified; and the union of man and woman will be free and indissoluble. Then will the man or woman who leaves his or her spouse, and marries another, be declared adulterous, as having broken the natural law of God by violating the concord, freely accepted, and to be freely maintained, until the death of one of the parties. The Master's words and his concealed thought were not intended to be understood until the predicted time of the New Revelation.

(Matth. xix. 10.)—Do not wonder at the disciples speaking thus; for being incarnate, they were influenced by Hebrew prejudices; and regarded it as a burden to be obliged to keep even the wife whom they had chosen.

Digitized by Google

But they did not speak thus without an object. Many believe that they speak from their own minds when they really speak under the influence of inspiration. This was the case with the disciples.

They had received inspiration, so much the more easily because it was in accordance with the personal ideas and prejudices due to surrounding influences. Their words were designed to lead to a lesson which when given over to human interpretations in its veiled form, should be useful both to the present and to the future. It was a lesson to be explained and developed by the present revelation, which should teach men the reasons for abstention from marriage; and also lay down a line of conduct to be pursued for the union according to the divine law.

(Matth. xix. 11, 12.)—We will now reveal the meaning of the words of Jesus in the verses quoted, by his authority.

You know that man chooses his experiences when he assumes the body; and you can therefore understand (compare §§ 2, 3, vol. i. p. 5 and foll.) that the spirit, before commencing a new earthly existence, is destined either to family life, or to sterility. Thus the tendencies of the flesh are often a trial which he must endure, if he would conquer them; and it is therefore not given to all to enter upon marriage.

"There are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb." As the spirit has chosen its experiences, it should resist the temptations of the flesh, and some who have to suffer this trial, assume a body which is incapable of answering to the needs of the spirit. We say the spirit, for the *material* spirit shares in the sensations of the flesh; and it is often this tendency of the spirit which leads the body into evil courses. Have you not heard of errant spirits who are incessantly pursued by the necessities of the body; needs which they cannot satisfy, and which are a torture to them? These tendencies may continue in incarnation, the spirit having as a punishment assumed a body, which cannot conform to them.

By a material spirit, you may understand a spirit having

Digitized by Google

tendencies towards matter, and feeling its influence, even when disengaged. The spirit assumes a perisprit suited to its development; but the perisprit of a spirit who is little advanced, and consequently subject to the allurements of matter, is very gross, and, though invisible to you, resembles the substances which compose your material bodies. The spirit incarnated under such conditions may be regarded as material, in the sense that its tastes, tendencies, and perispritic constitution assimilate it to matter.

Those who were born eunuchs are those whom their nature separates from the needs of the flesh. They should understand the object of the trial which they have to suffer, and which they have chosen; and ought not to allow any personal interest whatever to induce them to condemn a woman to live under their yoke. Human nature and its necessities are one of the means of progress placed at man's disposal, and therefore everything can conduce to his progress, if well directed.

Such men have failed grievously in their former existences by yielding to the most culpable tendencies; and have failed both in the duties of union according to the divine law, and in those of family life. They should strive to emerge victorious from the trial, and draw from it the intelligence and strength to conquer these tendencies of the flesh; and thus turn what might be a torture into a means of moral purification and progress. They may thus give the spirit the predominance over matter, and prepare themselves by a life of chastity for marriage and family life in another existence, according to the law of God. Is there anything surprising in this trial? Everything important in human life is designed to efface past faults, and to guard against future lapses.

"There are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men." This was a custom which prevailed very widely at the period when Jesus spoke to men, and lasted for a long time afterwards. Apart from this, some have become impotent from errors, the effects of which are felt throughout life. Do you not sometimes meet with such instances, even amid your own civilization?

Digitized by Google

Let these barbarous customs and odious actions which disgrace your humanity disappear from the world. But let those who thus suffer regard their condition as only an expiation designed to efface their past faults, and consequently as a trial which they must endure; and let those who are themselves to blame, understand that they have failed grievously in their experiences.

Let all such abstain from marriage, and strive to overcome the tendencies and lusts of the flesh, that what would otherwise be a torture may become a means of moral purification and progress, and thus prepare them for marriage and family life, in another existence.

"There are some who have made themselve eunuchs on account of the kingdom of the heavens." Those only who feel themselves sufficiently strong to accept the conditions of union according to the divine law, ought to marry; but let not him who is only led by a fickle and changeable spirit, and who does not care for family ties, marry. In short, let no one marry who is too weak to resist the temptations of the flesh, and the failings of humanity; for he would mislead both his companion and her children; and would have to give an account of their sufferings, their unhappiness, and even of their faults, if they should happen to commit any on account of his evil example. We speak here of the woman as well as the man; and she ought likewise to renounce her desires under like circumstances.

Those alone make themselves eunuchs on account of the kingdom of the heavens, who do not feel themselves sufficiently strong to fulfil the conditions of marriage and family life, and therefore renounce them; and in so doing have struggled with their own desires rather than lead others into evil. For this reason men and women ought not to enter upon so serious an action unless they feel themselves strong enough faithfully to fulfil its duties to the last, whether the marriage is fertile or sterile. The responsibility of a man is great when he calls to himself guilty spirits, to redeem, lead, and help to progress; but great also is the happiness of those who have rightly understood their task

Digitized by Google

in marriage and in family life. They have brought back wandering sheep to the fold, and the Master regards them as his good servants.

"He who is able to receive it, let him receive it." Jesus expressed himself thus, partly because his words were not to be taken only in their literal, but also in a figurative sense; and might be understood rightly or imperfectly; while, on the other hand, he did not wish to develop his thought, and to give a set form to his discourse. The time, prejudices, and the state of morals and intelligence of the age required his words to be veiled, that they might be useful to the present, and preparatory to the future. Human interpretations are the condition and means of moral and intellectual progress; and even the abuses which arise from misinterpretations fulfil a temporary use.

Some, like Origen, have understood the Master's words literally. Others have taken them figuratively, and have lived in a state of voluntary and perpetual continence as the best means of obtaining the kingdom of the heavens; and this false interpretation led to the celibacy of the clergy, and of all the monastic and religious orders of both sexes.*

But even these abuses have not been without their use. These religious associations were the sanctuaries of primitive times, to which the weak and persecuted fled, and where the arts and sciences were developed, and protected from the violence of the multitude, and of the powerful. They were asylums which were open to all whom brutality would have destroyed, but since the causes which rendered them useful have become changed, or have ceased, they should also have been modified.

We do not object to associations of men or women who do not feel sufficient energy to live in the turmoil of the world, and who seek in the silence of retreat the calm needful to cultivate and develop faculties which would be useful to all, but which the noise of the world would interfere with. But these communities should be formed by

* This appears to have been necessary to correct the immorality of the ancient world by a reactionary movement.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

those of similar feelings and tastes, and with unselfishness and generosity. They should be conservatories where delicate plants may find the temperature needful to their development, that they may yield ripe and savoury fruits, under favourable circumstances, which may be useful to the world. But their liberty should be complete, and they should be under no restraint, except the same desire for progress; and those who have developed their powers in silence, and feel themselves strong enough to return to their families, should be free to do so when it seems good to them. What we would desire is liberty of mind and action, always employed for the profit and progress of all.

You may look upon those who seclude themselves to avoid natural laws and family cares as selfish or fanatical. Such men often fall into worse delinquencies in the shade of the cloister, and under the cover of piety, than those who are led astray by the vices of society. Their errors are worse, because they have no admissible excuse, and because in most cases it was laziness or some other selfish motive which led them to adopt a course of life as unprofitable to themselves as to others. Such men are useless members of the great human family; dead branches which injure the tree by absorbing sap from the living branches around them. They do not labour for the kingdom of the heavens, and their sacrifice, which profits nobody, becomes the very cause of their condemnation.

§ 231. It is asserted that Jesus taught that voluntary and perpetual continence, embraced for the sake of God, is a gift of God himself, and the only virginity which he promises to bless; and that Jesus approved and advised vows of celibacy. This has led the Church to make celibacy obligatory on the priesthood, and on the members of all the monastic and religious orders of both sexes.

The starting-point is good, but the maxim is false. We have already explained the real meaning of the words which the Church has misunderstood, and therefore misapplied. Voluntary celibacy is good in the eyes of the Lord whenever it proceeds from a pure and unselfish motive. The man or woman who does not feel strong enough to fulfil the conditions of family life worthily, and with the needful disin-

Digitized by Google

terestedness and self-denial, does well in the sight of God to abstain from it, at whatever material or carnal personal sacrifice; but every one should always remain free to enter upon marriage and family life, if he feels himself strong enough to fulfil the obligations according to the divine law. It is then both a necessity and a duty, for it is the consecration of the laws of nature. Although those who feel themselves too weak to fulfil these duties should abstain from marriage, yet this should not lead them to withdraw themselves from the great human family; and still less should they pride themselves upon it under the influence either of mysticism, idleness, fanaticism, selfishness, or ambition. Where would be the merit then? It would nourish pride and wandering thoughts in the heart, and lead to a misplaced confidence.

Moses told you that God said, "It is not good for man to be alone;" for where one would be able to control his passions, a thousand would yield to them in secret, and would become hypocrites. Men, you are dependent on one another, and need each other's mutual aid and support. Do not undo the work of God; but rouse yourselves, sluggards, to contribute your labour to the general enterprise, for each man is as a drop of water in a river which flows without ceasing.

The Church has misinterpreted the words of Jesus, by imposing the vow of celibacy upon those who feel strong enough to enter upon married and family life, but who avoid the laws of nature, and seclude themselves as a means of gaining the kingdom of the heavens. Jesus promised a reward to free and voluntary virginity, proceeding from a pure and disinterested motive which should be active and useful; but not to indolent idleness. Some among you have won the prize, but how many have seen it crumble to dust when they imagined it to be within their grasp!

Thus you condemn celibacy as taught by the Church, which she has imposed upon the priests and the religious orders in addition to the two commandments which Christ declared to contain all the law and the prophets.

Digitized by Google

Thrice yes; for priests, like other men, ought to be allowed to marry if they feel strong enough to fulfil the obligations of the natural law of God. They ought to set the example of all the virtues which they preach; and what is the use of their perpetual, enforced, and obligatory celibacy? A union according to the divine law would have saved many from yielding to the allurements of the flesh, and thus falling into hypocrisy; and also from the disgrace and condemnation inflicted by your human justice when their delinquencies have been made known. How do they practise the laws of the family? They are away from their firesides, and most of them close their hearts to all the softer emotions, and lead a factitious life which grows up in them, and ends in selfishness, pride, and the dwarfing of the faculties of the soul. They are useless servants, who create a useless labour; and as they do not understand the law, they make a law for themselves. Those who are only priests by profession, as others are writers, shoemakers, musicians, or anything else, and whose sanctity is a means of rising from the humble sphere in which they would otherwise have lived, make it a stalking-horse to reach the first step of the dangerous ladder of honours and fortune. They are blind guides who lead others into the darkness in which they walk themselves.

But far be it from us to condemn the humble pastor who tends his sheep in the truth and sincerity of his ignorance, or to condemn the falsity of the path in which he walks. His intention being pure, purifies his actions; and his crown will be adorned with the flowers which the proud believed they were gathering for themselves.

Let those who feel themselves strong against the flesh, and weak in respect to family obligations, fight bravely, but let them remain in the midst of the battlefield; for how can they be victorious if they fly from it? Everyone ought to prove himself, and only to choose his course of life, whatever it may be, with a firm desire and resolve to succeed in the struggle.

What is to be thought of the religious orders who practise hospitality and charity, and on whom celibacy is also obligatory?

Digitized by Google

It will be rendered to each according to his works; for the work springs from the thought; and selfishness can only lead to unfruitful works.

Ought these religious orders to disappear, or to be modified in accordance with the light, activity, and liberty of the new era?

They should become modified; for you will see charitable associations spring up and multiply themselves infinitely; but they will all follow the one simple and generous course, acting for the general good in the liberty of the Lord, under the regulation of the laws of liberty, and human fraternity; and not for the good of each personally, which is a mystic usury condemned by the Lord.

§ 232. It has been asserted that Matth. xix. 10–12 were interpolated by some Gnostic or Manichean, who desired to avail himself of a reference to marriage to introduce a pretended testimony in favour of the opinions of his sect on celibacy.

Such interpretations arose from the ignorance of men who were unable to understand the thought of Christ, because of the veil of the letter, which intentionally covered the spirit. Man is always led astray by pride and the desire of novelty, and when he is not guided by pure sentiments he shuts himself up in darkness. Nevertheless, all such interpretations of revealed truth likewise attack received errors and are always useful. When the time has come, the truth will arise pure and victorious, leaving the ground at its feet literally strewn with the errors and lies which have fallen around it. Fear not, therefore, the attacks of all the free-thinkers, whose freedom consists in destroying everything without reflection, although they are unable to replace it. They are sowing, and you will reap. What was secret is now known, and what was hidden is now revealed.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 13–15. MARK, CHAP. X.—VERSES 13–16. LUKE, CHAP. XVIII. VERSES 15–17.

Humility the source of all Virtue.

Matt. xix. (13) Then little children were brought to him, that he might lay his hands upon them, and bless them, and the disciples

Digitized by Google

reproved them. (14) But Jesus said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of the heavens. (15) And he laid his hands upon them, and departed thence.

Mark x. (13) And they brought to him little children, that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked those who brought them. (14) And Jesus beholding it, was displeased, and said to them, Suffer the little children to come to me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God. (15) Verily I say unto you, If any one shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall by no means enter into it. (16) And he took them in his arms, and laid his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Luke xviii. (15) And they brought to him even new-born children that he should touch them, and when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. (16) And Jesus called to them, and said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God. (17) Verily I say to you, If any one shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall by no means enter it.

§ 233. We have already (§ 198, vol. ii. p. 169, and foll.) given you sufficient explanations on this subject. Jesus repeated his words to impress them more strongly on the minds of his disciples. It was the same thought expressed in other terms at a different time and place; simplicity of heart and humility of mind are at once the foundation, source, means, and path to virtue, purification, and progress, which lead to purity and perfection.

LUKE, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 1–8.

Parable of the Widow and the Unjust Judge.

(1) And he also repeated a parable to them, that one ought always to pray, and not to despond, saying, (2) There was a judge in a certain town, who neither feared God, nor regarded man. (3) And there was a widow in this town, and she came to him, saying, Avenge me on my adversary. (4) And he would not do it for a time, but afterwards he said to himself, Though I neither fear God nor regard man, (5) Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she weary me out at last by coming. (6) And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. (7) And shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night to him, and have compassion on them? (8) I say unto you that he will avenge them speedily. When the Son of Man cometh, will he find faith on the earth?

§ 234. Here you have an instance of an unprincipled and unjust man yielding to importunity, and doing justice to the widow (it is said, justice only); and how much more may you hope that the Lord will grant your persevering and

Digitized by Google

fervent requests, provided that they are also just! The spirit is not limited by time; and the body alone feels the moments of its duration. Do not trouble yourselves about the delay in the accomplishment of your wishes; not one of your words is lost; and you will perceive its effects where time knows no limits.

(V. 7.)—Each will receive according to his works when the time has come; and thus justice will be awarded to each; reward to the just, and punishment to the guilty. The spirit-revelation has taught you what this reward and punishment mean.

(V. 8.)—The justice of the Lord is exerted continually; and let those who would experience its sweetness endeavour to rank themselves among the elect; that is, among those who follow the traces of the Master. The Son of Man has been among you, and is still the personification of his moral teaching. Christ alludes to the advent of the new era of Spiritism which is opening before you, and which is destined to prepare for the coming of Jesus in all his spiritual glory, as the visible sovereign of his purified creatures on your earth, which will then likewise be purified; and the new era must re-establish his law as it emanated from himself.

The words, "When the Son of Man cometh, will he find faith in the earth?" signify that the pure law, personified by the Son of Man, will not find faith when it is proclaimed by the Spirits of the Lord, the organs of the Spirit of Truth. You can judge of this; the Son of Man has come to re-establish his kingdom among you; and do you think that he finds faith on earth?

It has been objected that there is no logical connection between the two clauses of v. 8.

Those who think so do not reflect that these words apply directly to the justice which is to be done to the elect; that is, to those who possess true faith, manifested in their works, and follow the steps of Jesus; as well as to those who have no active faith leading to works of justice, love, and charity, and therefore wander from his steps, and heap physical and

Digitized by Google

moral persecution on the elect. If there is not faith on earth, there will be punishment; this is the natural consequence.

LUKE, CHAP. XVIII.—VERSES 9–14.

The Pharisee and the Tax-gatherer.

(9) And he spake this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. (10) Two men went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. (11) The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax-gatherer. (12) I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I have. (13) And the tax-gatherer standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be gracious to me, the sinner. (14) I say unto you, this man went home justified rather than the other. For every one who exalteth himself shall be humbled, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

§ 235. Pride is man's bitterest enemy, and that which penetrates deepest into his heart, and infixes itself most obstinately. He who regards himself as superior to his brother in any respect is guilty of pride. What merit does he possess in the eyes of the Lord? However strictly he may observe the law, he only fulfils a strict duty. Consequently, he commits a serious fault in presuming to imagine that his Creator is pledged to reward him for his supposed merits. He sins against charity in judging his brother harshly; for, notwithstanding appearances, the brother who appears to be most miserable or even guilty may have the purest heart. At least, he may possess that humility which leads him to estimate himself justly, and enables him to repress evil. Be severe towards yourselves, and mild and indulgent towards others.

"The tax-gatherer went home justified." He had done justice to himself by acknowledging his infirmity; he was therefore on the right path; for an evil that is recognised ceases to exist the moment that a remedy is applied. The Pharisee was not justified. He had been guilty of an act of ostentation, and had been wanting in charity towards one of

Digitized by Google

his brethren, instead of humbling himself before the Lord, on account of his faults, however slight they might have been. Pride is a grave fault, and will be punished; but sincere humility is the best means of reformation; for it leads to progress.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 16–26; MARK, CHAP. X.—VERSES 17–27; LUKE, CHAP. XVIII. VERSES 18–27.

The Rich Young Man.

Matth. xix. (16) And behold one came and said to him, Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have age-long life; (17) And he said to him, Why callest thou me good? no one is good, save one: God. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. (18) He saith to him, Which? And Jesus said to him, Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; (19) Honour thy father and thy mother, and love thy neighbour as thyself. (20) The young man saith to him, All these things have I observed from my youth; in what do I still fall short? (21) And Jesus said to him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell thy possessions, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. (22) And when the young man heard the speech, he went away sad, for he had great possessions. (23) And Jesus said to his disciples, Verily I say to you that with difficulty shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of the heavens. (24) And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (25) And when his disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, Who then can be saved? (26) And Jesus looked upon them, and said, To men this is impossible, but to God all things are possible.

Mark x. (17) And as he set forth on the road, there came one running and kneeling to him, and asking him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit age-long life? (18) And Jesus said to him, Why callest thou me good? no one is good, save God alone. (19) Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery; do not kill; do not steal; do not bear false witness; honour thy father and thy mother. (20) And he answered and said to him, Teacher, I have observed all these things from my youth. (21) And Jesus looking upon him, loved him, and said to him, One thing is wanting in thee; go and sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and come and take up the cross, and follow me. (22) And he being troubled at the saying went away sorrowful, for he had large possessions. (23) And Jesus looking round said to his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! (24) And the disciples wondered at his sayings. And Jesus again answered, and said to them, Children, how hardly shall they that trust in riches enter into the kingdom of God! (25) It is easier for a camel to pass through the needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (26) And they were exceedingly

Digitized by Google

amazed, saying to one another, Who then can be saved? (27) And Jesus looked upon them, and said, To men this is impossible, but not to God, for to God all things are possible.

Luke xviii. (18) And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit age-long life? (19) And Jesus said to him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save one: God. (20) Thou knowest the commandments: Do not commit adultery; do not kill; do not steal; do not bear false witness; Honour thy father and thy mother. (21) And he said, All these things have I observed from my youth. (22) And when Jesus heard these things, he said to him, One thing is still left for thee; sell all that thou hast, and give it away to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. (23) And when he heard these things, he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich. (24) And Jesus, perceiving that he was very sorrowful, said, How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God! (25) For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (26) And those who heard it said, Who then can be saved? (27) And he said, The things which are impossible to men are possible to God.

§ 236. The young man was drawn to Jesus by spiritual influence, to serve as a lesson and example to those around him. In this case, as in all others where it was convenient and opportune, Jesus had recourse to material images and expressions to produce a stronger effect upon the intelligence of the time, to extinguish selfishness, and attachment to worldly possessions, and to prepare for the advent of the Spirit, when the reign of the letter should have borne its fruits.

(Matth. xix. 16, 17; Mark x. 17, 18; Luke xviii. 18, 19.) —By saying, "None is good save one: God," Jesus condemned beforehand all idea of divinity, which he foresaw would be attributed to him by men. He made them understand (as should have been noticed sooner) that although he called himself the Son of God, and was called the Son of the Most High by the angel who was sent to Mary, yet he did not regard himself as God, who is the Father, and whom he afterwards proclaimed to be the only true God, the Uncreated Creator; and therefore, as he himself was only the Son of God, the pre-eminent quality of goodness did not belong to him who was so eminently good above and amidst all men. He thus made men understand that he is the Son of God Most High, in the sense of the words of the Prophet

Digitized by Google

(Psalm lxxxi. 1 and 6), which equally apply to every created spirit. He taught them that he could only be called God in the sense of this ancient prophet, who ranked him among the Gods, according to old Polytheistic ideas; but that he was always, like every created spirit, the Son of the Most High, who is the God of Gods, to quote the same Psalm.

The spirit does not obtain eternal life (which means the spiritual life, which is its normal and fluidic condition), until it has attained to moral perfection, and become a pure spirit. It is then free from all material influences, and is in direct communication with its Creator; and may then say, like Jesus, "I and my Father are one."

(Matth. xix. 17–21; Mark x. 19–21; Luke xviii. 20–22.) —Jesus quoted the commandments which men ought to obey. They were those which Moses delivered to the Hebrews, and may be summed up as follows:—Never do to others as you would not have them do to you; but observe the law of the Decalogue by abstaining from every evil action against your brothers, in thought, word, and deed, morally, materially, and intellectually. On the contrary, always do unto others as you would have them do unto you, and love your neighbour as you would wish him to love you, by practising justice, charity (both material and moral), devotion, and self-renunciation.

The sacrifice imposed on the young man was not meant to show that no one can reach God without laying aside all his worldly wealth; but simply that all attempts to fulfil the law are sterile, unless free from selfishness, and sanctified by charity. Charity and self-abnegation were deficient in this young man, and Jesus expressed it by saying, "Yet lackest thou one thing." In order to arrest the attention of the material men to whom he spoke, he concealed the spirit of the moral teaching under the letter of an absolute sacrifice of worldly wealth. The lesson which he intended to convey was to be explained to future generations when they had become able to bear it. He desired to show forcibly that where the treasure is, there also is the heart likewise.

(Matth. xix. 22–24; Mark x. 23–25; Luke xviii. 23–25.)—

Digitized by Google

Jesus read the thoughts of the young man, and perceived his sadness, and it was when he was about to go that he spoke to his disciples; and the young man went away after hearing his words.

Jesus desired to impress the multitude strongly with the idea that there is no salvation without charity, and to prepare future generations, who should be enlightened by the spiritual revelation, to understand that wealth is one of the most formidable temptations to man, and an absolute barrier to all moral progress, unless he uses it as a means of love and charity towards his brethren. Wealth generally leads to selfishness, and to an attachment to worldly blessings. Man can only progress rapidly through charity, devotion, and self-renunciation. Justice is limited to what is just and unjust, or legal and illegal. He who is just in the human sense of justice is not always charitable; but he who practises justice and mercy practises charity; for mercy and charity are the same.

Charity is unlimited, and should always be prepared for any sacrifice which would be useful to others. Charity should never regard her own personality, but should extend out her helping hand to all who are in suffering and want, and should eagerly seek them out. Her incessant action should not be confined to men only, but to all animals, however insignificant. Charity is the Providence hidden in the heart of man, and diffusing her benefits over all nature. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you; and then you will never do anything to others which you would not have done to yourself.

Devotion to others and self-renunciation result from true charity, which proceeds from the heart. We have stated this to give more emphasis to the explanation; for men limit charity to giving alms of their abundance. You cannot be devoted to your brethren without self-renunciation; for would not charity impose upon you any painful sacrifices to which you are impelled by devotion, in the sincerity of your hearts? Devotion, self-renunciation, and charity are an inseparable trilogy.

Digitized by Google

It is likewise impossible that charity should not include disinterestedness. It ought not only to be exercised without thought of any reward whatever (for it could not then be called charity); but it ought not even to think of heavenly rewards; for even this would still be selfishness. Sweet charity ought to be practised for the sake of the good which it may produce; and conversions are wrought by the love of the neighbour, and not of one's self. He who gives to the poor, whether the poverty is material, moral, or intellectual, lends to God. But beware of expecting extravagant interest, for you would then lose your capital.

Charity should be devoted, disinterested, brave, and active. She should be gifted with all courage and virtue; she should go on the battle-fields, succour the wounded and dying amid the rain of bullets; and exhort them to repentance. She should hide herself in the cottages to rouse a spark which shall warm hearts and quicken souls; she should ascend the steps of thrones to speak the truth, and to tear away the bandage which pride and flattery bind over the eyes of crowned heads. She should raise up the poor who are in want of daily bread; and she should humble the pride of the powerful by her soft words. She should raise the courage of the weak and feeble; and her eyes should be always opened and turned on all sides to discover moral or physical sufferings, infirmities, and faults; and she should have a thousand hands always ready to succour others.

(Matth. xix. 25, 26; Mark x. 26, 27; Luke xviii. 26, 27.)—The disciples were greatly surprised at the Master's words, and especially at the material image which appeared to close the kingdom of God for ever against a rich man, even if he had kept the commandments. They could only perceive the difficulties to be surmounted, according to the literal meaning of the words, and did not comprehend the means by which these could be overcome. Who, then, can be saved? And if God alone can save, of what avail are works and faith? This question has been often asked. Look into your own hearts, Spiritists, and you will find

Digitized by Google

the answer. How can man purify himself sufficiently in one short life to save himself? Would his works be sufficiently good, or his faith sufficiently firm? Who, then, can save him, except God, that tender and indulgent Father, who gives him time, and forgives the debt of his wicked servant, until he shall be enabled to pay it? God grants him time; that powerful agent which helps man to reach the goal, however long and difficult the path. God alone is good, and God alone can save; for God only is indulgent and magnanimous; and he alone holds the duration of time in his hand.

Man himself cannot judge of the degree of purity, which it is needful for him to attain; and God alone can estimate it. The means granted to men to surmount all difficulties and attain the end are to be found in rebirth, and reincarnations, which are expiatory at first, and preceded by expiations which are proportioned and appropriated to the faults committed. At length they become glorious, when the spirit gains entrance to the kingdom of God (or the kingdom of the heavens), by attaining to moral perfection.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 27–30. MARK, CHAP. X.—VERSES 28–31. LUKE, CHAP. XVIII. VERSES 28–30.

Promises to the Apostles.

Matth. xix. (27) Then Peter answered and said, Behold, we have left all things, and followed thee; what then shall we have? (28) And Jesus said to them, Verily, I say to you, that you who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (29) And every one who has left houses or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, on account of my name, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall gain age-lasting life. (30) But many that are first shall be last, and the last first.

Mark x. (28) And Peter began to say to him, Behold, we have left all things, and have followed thee. (29) And Jesus answered and said, Verily, I say to you, There is no one who has left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands on account of me and of the Gospel; (30) Who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time; houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions; and age-lasting life in the age to come. (31) But many who are first shall be last, and the last first.

Digitized by Google

Luke xviii. (28) And Peter said, Behold, we have left all things, and have followed thee. (29) And he said to them, Verily, I say to you, that there is no one who has left house or parents or brethren or wife or children on account of the kingdom of God, (30) Who shall not receive manifold more in this time; and age-long life in the age to come.

§ 237. (Matth. xix. 27, 28.)—The Apostles who were already engaged in their mission were forewarned of their advancement. Having undertaken the work of the regeneration of humanity when they were incarnated at the time of the appearance of Christ on earth, they must continue to serve the Master until the moment when men shall have accomplished the end and object of their existence.

As ministers of the will of the Just One, they "judge" the tribes of Israel up to the present time, for they watch over the advancement of your planet, being intermediaries between Jesus and the spirits who surround you, just as Jesus is, as regards your planet, an intermediary between the Lord and themselves. They only communicate on exceptional occasions, to fulfil a spiritual mission.

The time of the regeneration is the period when the spiritual revelation unfolds before men the truths which they were previously only able to perceive under the cover of parable, and the veil of the letter. The time when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory is the period when all will feel the glory of the spiritual light, and bow before him who must be the only Shepherd of the flock which the Lord has entrusted to him.

The words addressed to the Apostles, "You also shall sit upon twelve thrones," are allegorical expressions denoting the lofty elevation to which the ministers of Jesus will then have attained. "The twelve tribes of Israel" are an emblem of the divisions among nations which still exist on earth. The Jews were always thinking of their nationality, and could not fix their attention on anything not personally relating to themselves. Jesus appropriated his language to the period and the audience.

The expression "*judging* the twelve tribes of Israel" has not the same force as in modern languages. Jesus used the

Digitized by Google

word *judge* in different senses, according to the ideas or revelations which he desired to express under a veil. To *judge* means here to *govern;* and to give to every one according to his works and merits. The sense in which the Apostles judge the twelve tribes of Israel (or the nations entrusted to their guardianship) is that they watch over the accomplishment of their trials and expiations, and may therefore be regarded as *judges*, who impose on the guilty the penalties which the Law, personified in God, lays upon them. Expiation and remorse form the punishment, and the spirits who watch over these expiations fix their nature. Do not misunderstand us; we do not say that they fix the kind of trials which a spirit must suffer on returning to your earth. As a general rule, the spirit is free to choose them; but they carefully consider whether they are proportioned to the strength of the sinner, and to his chances of success. Their controlling action is exerted chiefly in the spiritual state. The remorse of the sinner is personified in the view of his faults; and the cruel phantoms which pursue him, and pierce him with the sharp arrows of bitter recollections, are the result of the will of the spirits who "judge the tribes of Israel." They proportion the punishment to the nature of the crime, and to the obduracy of the criminal; and the good, though less elevated, spirits around you watch over its execution. As we have already explained, they raise up living pictures before the eyes of the guilty, by means of the fluids and their combinations, so as to produce a complete illusion. Nothing takes place without an object; remorse leads to repentance, and repentance to the desire for reparation and progress.

We must now direct your attention to an important point in the words of Jesus respecting the twelve thrones. He addressed these words to Judas Iscariot, whom he knew would become the traitor, and who failed so grievously in his mission; as well as to the eleven faithful Apostles. These words imply that Judas Iscariot would be equal to the others in future ages, and that he would finally be regenerated by the means of moral and intellectual purification and progress

Digitized by Google

which were reserved for him, and which would be open to him as well as to all other guilty spirits, with time, expiation, and reincarnation, which include hell, purgatory, reparation, and progress. These words also proclaim beforehand the falsity of the monstrous and impious doctrine of the eternal punishment of guilty spirits, and of that eternal hell to which the Roman Church has condemned Judas Iscariot as the greatest of sinners.

We have only spoken of the twelve Apostles, because we confine ourselves to explaining the words of Jesus which were directly addressed to them; but we do not intend you to suppose that the twelve Apostles alone were chosen to fulfil these offices round the Master. There are more happy spirits who approach him that you could calculate, and all have their own mission and employment. They labour zealously at your progress, and they aid the advancement of spirits who have once arrived at the point of immaterial incarnation, and who must then progress in the fluidic worlds.

Matth. xix. 29; Mark x. 28, 29; Luke xviii. 28, 29.)— These words are also figurative. Unhappily men still obstinately persist in looking at the letter only; but they should understand them according to the Spirit. Jesus mentions these sacrifices as an example, as the greatest that man can make. All those who make any sacrifice whatever in obedience to the law of love to God, and devotion to their brethren will be rewarded; for their progress will be rapid. They will find a hundredfold, even in this world, for what they have abandoned. Those who tear themselves from domestic happiness to obey the law of Jesus, and to spread it among those who are ignorant of it, will find fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and friends; for they will meet with sympathetic and grateful hearts; not always, but often. Their family will be increased by all the scattered members whom they have assembled; the family of God, a vast family. in which every member feels the tenderness and devotion of the child for its father, mother, brothers, and sisters.

Man is still too selfish to understand this extension of love

Digitized by Google

which grows and increases in strength by dividing and spreading among a multitude. Do not imagine that the most intimate family affections are annihilated; on the contrary, you will find them more ardent and purer; but they will be less exclusive.

God is our Father; we are all his children, and we should all love each other with ardent affection, devote ourselves to each other, and eagerly sacrifice our own happiness for that of our brethren. Love is the sole law of regeneration; and love is the source whence arise all the virtues which should cause your existence to bring forth good fruits. Love is the source whence the soul has drawn its life from God; love is the eternal river on which the soul will float to lose itself in God. Love God above all things, and your brethren more than yourselves. Do not misunderstand our saying that you will lose yourselves in God. Does not love unite you to its object? Love is the pure feeling which rules over all, and which approaches nearest to the Divinity, who is all love. Thus the soul will lose itself in God, by approaching him nearer and nearer, but always preserving its own individuality and immortality in space and eternity.

(Matth. xix. 30; Mark x. 31.)—Love includes humility and charity; but if genuine, fruitful; and persevering on the path of progress, it desires the perfection both of itself and its brethren. Many who have started first will reach the goal last, from want of perseverance. Those who rely upon themselves, and think they can advance quicker, and surpass their brethren, will find themselves impeded by their pride, and proportionately retarded in their course. It has been thus in the past, it is so in the present, and will be so in the future.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XX.—VERSES 1–16.

Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard.

(1) For the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a man, a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. (2) And having agreed with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. (3) And going out about the third hour,

Digitized by Google

he saw others standing idle in the market place, (4) And said to them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and I will give you what is fair. And they went. (5) Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did the same. (6) And about the eleventh hour, he went out and found others standing idle, and says to them, Why stand ye here idle for the whole day? (7) They say to him, Because no one has hired us. He says to them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and you shall receive whatever is fair. (8) And when it was evening, the master of the vineyard says to his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last to the first. (9) And they who came about the eleventh hour, received each a denarius. (10) And when the first came, they thought they would have received more, and they also received each a denarius. (11) And when they had received it, they murmured against the householder, saying, (12) These last have only worked for an hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have borne the burden and scorching heat of the day. (13) And he answered one of them, and said, Comrade, I do thee no injustice; didst thou not agree with me for a denarius? (14) Take what is yours, and go away; and I will give to this last even as to you. Is it not right for me to do what I will with my own? (15) Is thine eye evil because I am good? (16) Thus the last shall be first, and the first last, for many are called, but few are chosen.

§ 238. This parable must be explained from two distinct points of view; firstly, that of the Jews and Christians who were to live under the reign of the letter, until the New Revelation; and, secondly, from the spiritual stand-point of the present Revelation, which enables you to understand the thought of Jesus which was hidden under the letter. From a literal point of view, Jesus draws a parallel between the Jews, who were called to the knowledge of God from the earliest ages, and the Gentiles, who should be called to this knowledge through his mission. At this period, when the pride of the chief men among the Jews set up a barrier between themselves, and all who were not subject to the law of Moses, it was needful to hold out great and encouraging hopes to repentant sinners, and to humble the presumption of those who believed that they alone were entitled to the favours of the Lord, because they were born Hebrews rather than Gentiles; and it was needful to make a strong impression on their minds that they might be able to remember it. It was with this object that Jesus spoke the words recorded in v. 16. The time had not yet come for him to explain the difference between the working hours of the labourers, and the equality of their hire, by reincar-

Digitized by Google

nation. This shows that the labourers who had been called first remained stationary in several existences, while those who were called at the eleventh hour, and worked at their advancement with zeal and activity, will find themselves equal as regards the work done, when they are called to receive their reward at the end of the day. The sum of their progress will be equal, and they will consequently be entitled to the same reward.

You should specially notice that Jesus purposely leaves the amount of work done by each of the labourers out of consideration, leaving it to the promised spiritual revelation to explain his thought according to the Spirit. Does Jesus say that the labourers who began their work in the morning were industrious? Does he say that they were either exhausted by the heat, or fatigued by the length of the day; that they had lost no time, and had advanced the work of the Lord more than those who were called at the eleventh hour? Does he say that they had done more than the latter, who felt that they had lost time, and hastened to finish their task that they might be able to say to the Master, "Lord, I have done all thy will?" No, the labourers who had been called first, and who received only a denarius each, like those of the eleventh hour, and therefore murmured against the householder, did not say that they had advanced the work more than the others; they confined themselves to saying that they had been in the vineyard, and borne the burden and heat of the day, whereas the others had only worked for one hour. You must also interpret the words of the householder (verses 13–15) in accordance with justice, for you should always seek for justice in the works of God, and in the words of Jesus. His words were intended to prevent the rise of envy among men, and to encourage those who had but lately come to the knowledge of Gospel truths, and might have feared that they would have no right to the reward promised to those who had received this knowledge earlier.

When the parable is freed from the veil of the letter, the idea relates to the work of spirits from the moment of their

Digitized by Google

spiritual creation; when they have been invested with free will, and have failed, and have therefore been forced to incarnate themselves upon your earth, and to progress by successive reincarnations. Some have worked at their advancement for centuries, and have suffered many incarnations, but have worked lazily, and have allowed themselves to drift with the course of events, while others, though belonging to a later creation, have entered eagerly upon the path of progress; and both have arrived at the goal at the same time. Their work has been equal in value, and they are therefore entitled to the same reward. You may observe that the labourers who were called at the eleventh hour had not refused to work; they were waiting for it, and as soon as they heard the call, they rose up joyfully to accomplish their task.

You should understand that the different hours at which the master hired the labourers, and the end of the day when all were entitled to an equal reward, are divisions suited to the intelligence of the listeners. There are no divisions of time in eternity; but these allusions relate to classes of spirits who commence their work at different periods, and to the time when those who belong to creations posterior to each other, meet at the same point of progress, and are consequently all entitled to the same reward. The oldest in the order of creation have undergone a greater number of incarnations than the others, because they have either remained stationary, or have worked at their advancement less diligently than those who have entered on their course later, but have arrived at the same goal at the same time, on account of their zealous and sustained advance in the path of progress.

Labourers of the eleventh hour, do not fear to approach the Great Father, nor to undertake the task which he has given you to do, for he does not regard the length of time which you have taken to accomplish it, but the zeal and cheerfulness with which it has been executed. But you who have stood in the market-place till the eleventh hour must not expect to receive the reward if you refuse to answer

Digitized by Google

the call. You must not say, whenever the Father calls his willing labourers, "We will come later, for we are not yet inclined; the day is long; the sun is scorching, and rest is sweet; let us wait to begin our task till the cool of the evening." Beware of this, for the coolness of the evening will bring with it the darkness which will cover you, and you will find it too late to begin, and will be obliged to wait till the dawn of another day shall find you standing in the market-place, waiting for work.

Industrious labourers who have begun your task at day-break, rejoice in the goodness of the Lord, for his generosity extends to those who were not able to do better, but were willing labourers, as well as to yourselves. Do not regard his bounties to your brethren with an evil eye; for what injury does his goodness do to you? And does not the father of a family who divides his goods among his children give an equal share to all? Does not the last receive as much as the first? You should never envy the lot of your brethren, for you do not know the causes which have produced these effects; and you do not know whether he who has been called to the vineyard last would not have worked harder than you if he had heard the Master's voice at dawn. Let each of you accomplish his own task, and aid your brethren to fulfil theirs, if you have the means, and bless the Father of the family who looks rather at the intention than at the work; for nearly all your work is bad.

You should now understand the object and meaning of v. 16. From a literal point of view, these words were not designed to divide the labourers into two classes, the elect and the reprobate, for all the labourers, whether first or last, were entitled to receive the same reward from the Father of the family, on the sole condition of having deserved it at the end of the day; and with the difference only that the last have earned it in less time than the first, because they have advanced the master's work equally in a shorter time. Therefore all who are called ought to be chosen; but although many are called, few are chosen, because

Digitized by Google

many delay, or lose their time, and do not fulfil their task. There are only a few who work with zeal and activity at the work which the Master has given them to do; and therefore the first will be last and the last will be first; and many are called, but few are chosen.

According to the Spirit, these words refer generally to the secret motives which guide the actions of men, and render them acceptable in the sight of the Lord through love, humility, and disinterestedness. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. The first who were called to the knowledge of the true faith, which is the law preached to men by Jesus, will arrive last at the goal, if they wander into bypaths, instead of following the straight course; for then their way will be long and difficult, and will bring them back to their starting-point, while those who started last, but have always advanced straight and perseveringly towards the goal, will arrive there sooner. Those spirits who have started on the path of progress, and have either remained stationary, or advanced slowly and idly along the path of incarnations and experiences (and this is the case with most), although, perhaps, the first called in the order of Creation will be the last chosen, for they will be the last to attain to moral perfection, whereas the spirits who have always advanced with zeal and activity (who are the minority) will be the first chosen, though they may be the last in the order of Creation, and thus the last called to enter on the path of progress.

§ 239. This parable has been condemned as apocryphal, for it has been said, "It is not justice which regulates the reward due to each, but simply the good pleasure of the Master. This time, it is true, the Master is pleased to give the same reward to the first labourers, and to the last; but according to his principle, 'Is it not right for me to do what I will with my own?' he might just as well have given ten or a hundred times as much to the last as to the first; and it has therefore been said that it is even lawful to govern a society of slaves on the same principle."

It is foolish never to look beyond the letter, or to seek for the Spirit only to interpret it according to your own ideas. Always seek for justice in the works of God, and in the

Digitized by Google

words of Jesus; and if you would interpret them, let it not be according to your own interests and preconceptions, but with the full approval of your conscience. The answer to this criticism is included in the explanation which we have just given you of the end and object of the parable. Let these critics consider the language and motives of Jesus in reference both to the present and the future, and seek for the thought of the Master, veiled by the letter, and covered by the parable, from the point of view of the spiritual Creation, and the course of the spirit on the path of progress by successive incarnations; and they will then see that there is neither favour, nor caprice, but simply justice. We may point out to you that a spirit whose first incarnation on your earth was a thousand years ago, may not have arrived, in your age, beyond the stage of the inhabitants of Australia, whereas another who assumed his material envelope only three hundred years ago, may have already arrived at the stage of a Laplander. Do you not think that the latter has deserved better than he who preceded him in the course of incarnations on your planet? Even supposing that, instead of advancing so rapidly, he had only advanced to the Australian's level, they would both have arrived at the same incarnation; but instead of questioning the justice of the Master as regards the equality of the reward, would you not say that the second had deserved better? But supposing that the first had reached a grade higher by mere lapse of time, while the second was only a grade lower, would it not be just that they should receive the same reward, if the second had worked relatively as hard as the first?

MATTHEW, CHAP. XX.—VERSES 17–19. MARK, CHAP. X.—VERSES 32–34. LUKE, CHAP. XVIII. VERSES 31–34.

Jesus foretells his Crucifixion.

Matth. xx. (17) And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples apart on the way, and said to them, (18) Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the

Digitized by Google

chief priests and scribes. (19) And they shall condemn him to death, and they shall deliver him up to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and on the third day he shall rise again.

Mark x. (32) And they were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was advancing before them, and they were amazed, and they feared as they followed him, And taking the twelve aside, he began to speak to them again about the things which were going to happen to him. (33) Behold, we are going to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him over to the Gentiles. (34) And they shall mock him and scourge him and spit upon him, and shall put him to death; and on the third day he shall rise again.

Luke xviii. (31) And he took the twelve, and said to them, Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which were written through the prophets shall be accomplished to the Son of Man. (32) For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and insulted and spit upon. (33) And they shall scourge him, and put him to death, and he shall rise again on the third day. (34) And they understood nothing of these things, and this saying was hid from them, and they did not understand what was said.

§ 240. Jesus now repeats the prophecy which he had already spoken (Matth. xvi. 21; xvii. 20–22; Mark viii. 31; ix. 30; Luke ix. 22, 44, 45) concerning his death and resurrection, with the addition of new and more precise details. These words need no explanation; they are positive. Jesus foretold all these events before they came to pass, and thus gave a greater emphasis to all his sayings, and a much greater confidence in his mission, when events had justified his words. The narratives of the Evangelists complete each other, and the variations between them are the sum-total of the prophecy of Jesus, of which each recorded a part. The disciples could not understand the exact meaning of the Master's words any more than before. The idea of his resurrection was incomprehensible to them, and they were purposely left in obscurity about it, that the coming events might take their course without interruption. You are told that the Apostles were all amazed and terrified, as they followed Jesus on the way to Jerusalem, because they feared the priests and the chief men among the Jews, whom they felt that it would be most difficult to escape from.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XX.—VERSES 20–28. MARK, CHAP. X.—VERSES 35–45.

The Sons of Zebedee.

Matth. xx. (20) Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, doing obeisance to him, and asking something of him. (21) And he said to her, What wilt thou? She saith to him, Promise that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left, in thy kingdom. (22) And Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I am about to drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say to him, We are able. (23) And he saith to them, Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism with which I shall be baptized; but to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but is for those for whom it has been reserved by my Father. (24) And when the ten heard it, they were indignant with the two brothers. (25) But Jesus called them, and said, You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them. (26) But it shall not be thus among you; but whoever shall desire to be great among you, let him be your attendant. (27) And whoever would be first among you, let him be your servant. (28) Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Mark x. (35) And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him, saying, Teacher, we desire that thou shouldst do for us what we ask. (36) And he said to them, What do you wish me to do for you? (37) And they said to him, Grant that we may sit one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy glory. (38) And Jesus said to them, You know not what you ask. Are you able to drink of the cup which I drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? (39) And they said to him, We are able. And Jesus said to them, You shall indeed drink of the cup which I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; (40) But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but is for those for whom it has been reserved. (41) And the ten heard it, and began to be indignant about James and John. (42) But Jesus called them and said to them, You know that those who are chosen to rule over the nations lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. (43) But it shall not be thus with you, but if any one will be great among you, let him be your minister. (44) And whoever desires to be first, shall be servant of all. (45) For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

§ 241 (Matth. xx. 20, 21; Mark x. 35–37).—The difference between the two narratives is unimportant. The mother of James and John was with them, like many others, who accompanied their sons and brothers, and followed Jesus. The mother and her two sons spoke to Jesus successively; but his reply was addressed to the two brothers. Thus the two narratives explain and complete

Digitized by Google

each other. Among the ancients, the right was the place of honour, as it is still, though to a less extent, among yourselves; and although the left implied some inferiority, it was nevertheless likewise a place of honour as compared with the other guests. James and John made this request that they might be first to secure celestial honours, according to their worldly notions, and rank immediately after Jesus, whom they supposed would be the host at the celestial feast, where they would all be guests. The words need not be taken literally, but as an image of the rank to which they aspired.

(Matth. xx. 22, 23; Mark x. 38–40.)—Jesus alluded to the sacrifice which was about to take place, and not to the water with which John had baptized him. He subsequently alluded in general terms to the martyrdom which was suffered by most of the Apostles, in accordance with their Master's example. He afterwards asserts the divine supremacy over every spirit, however elevated; and reminds men that God alone knows when the spirit is sufficiently pure to sit on the "right" or the "left" of the Master; and that God is one, and almighty, and alone possesses sovereignty as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, to admit or to reject, until the purification is complete. "You know not what you ask," said Jesus to James and John. In fact, they were incapable in their incarnate state, and during their earthly mission, of perceiving the meaning of their request, or of the answers which they received, which related to the immutable laws which God has established from all eternity for the progress of the spirit, and its ascending course to perfection.

(Matth. xx. 24–28; Mark x. 41–45.)—After the indignation which the ten other Apostles felt towards James and John, Jesus gave them a short and simple lesson, urging on men humility, disinterestedness, self-renunciation, and devotion towards all. You can all understand this. This lesson bore fruit among the disciples and the first Christians. But men have lost sight of it, and wandered from its practice, ever since the Church of Christ became, subsequently to apostolic times, a kingdom of this world, sometimes taking part with the powers of this world, and sometimes struggling

Digitized by Google

against them. Thus the Church has been led into pride, ambition, domination, and intolerance, and into abuses and excesses which have resulted from these errors and passions.

The time has come when the Master's words must be fulfilled, and become a practical truth, and when he who would be the greatest among you will always be ready to serve his brethren, and will be the servant of all. Spiritists, who are the first pioneers of the era of regeneration, set your brethren an example of humility, disinterestedness, self-renunciation, and devotion towards all. Gather together the scattered materials, and prepare for the reconstruction of the Church of Christ on the immovable and indestructible foundations of liberty, equality, and fraternity, by practising justice, love, and reciprocal and fraternal charity. Jesus himself laid these foundations when he proclaimed among you that all the Law and the Prophets are contained in the love of God, your Creator; and of your neighbour as yourselves. The practice of this double commandment consists in the observance of the laws of justice, love, and charity, which includes the observance of the laws of work and progress for the perfection of yourselves and of your brethren.

Prepare for the reconstruction of this Church of Christ; for your planet should be his temple, and all men should be his faithful followers, apart from all the different external forms of religion which now divide them. Men, our dearly-loved brothers, prepare yourselves all to become the disciples of Jesus by endeavouring to walk in his steps, and by understanding and practising his lessons and examples in spirit and in truth. We repeat in the name of the Master, "Let him who will be the greatest among you be the servant of all," even as the Son of Man came to regenerate you, by showing you all the paths of moral perfection through humility, disinterestedness, self-abnegation, and absolute devotion, extending to the sacrifice of life itself for one's brethren.

Jesus said, "The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many," and not for all, because at the time of

Digitized by Google

the purification of your planet, some rebellious and obstinately guilty spirits will be removed from your earth, and cast down upon other inferior planets, where they will be obliged to expiate their offences, and to progress under the guidance of another Christ of God. We hope that those who are thus rejected will be few in number; for the path of progress is open to all. You have all your free-will and the law of love to guide you safely and surely in the right path. Jesus never established two classes of the "elect" and the reprobate. You may realize the full grandeur of the Master's words; all will not attain the goal under the same leadership; but all will reach it at last.

LUKE, CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 1–10.

Conversion of Zacchæus.

(1) And he entered Jericho, and passed through. (2) And behold there was a man named Zacchæus, a chief among the tax-gatherers, and he was rich. (3) And he sought to see who Jesus was, and could not for the crowd, because he was small in stature. (4) And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree, that he might see him, because he was about to pass that way. (5) And as he came to the place, Jesus looked up and saw him, and said to him, Zacchæus, make haste and come down, for I must remain at thy house to-day. (6) And he hastened to come down, and showed him the way rejoicing. (7) And all who saw it murmured, saying, that he was gone to lodge with a sinful man. (8) And Zacchæus stood up, and said to the Lord, Behold, the half of my goods, Lord, I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. (9) And Jesus said to him, To-day is salvation come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. (10) For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

§ 242. The meaning of this incident is obvious. Jesus came to aid those who were lost. His persuasive morality bore fruit in some hearts, and they who sought to put his principles in practice were saved; for they entered on the path of rapid and continuous progress. The morality of Jesus is always pure and comforting, and is still before your eyes. You have heard it preached, but unfortunately most of you do not try to apply it to yourselves. Is this the fault of those who hear, or of those who speak? O, endeavour to imitate Zacchæus, and hasten to prepare your

Digitized by Google

abode to receive the Lord! Prepare to purify your earth by purifying yourselves; listen to the words of Jesus, and apply them to yourselves; hasten to repair the injury which you have done to your brethren in word and deed; and return seriously to your better selves, and you also, like Zacchæus, may hear the Master's words sounding sweetly in the depths of your hearts. You will then become a child of Abraham, like Zacchæus. The Jews interpreted those words to imply an heir of heaven; and therefore he who enters on the good path is from this point of view a child of Abraham. Jesus repeats (v. 10) the words which we have already explained (vol. ii. p. 181).

MATTHEW, CHAP. XX.—VERSES 29–34. MARK, CHAP. X.—VERSES 46–52. LUKE, CHAP. XVIII. VERSES 35–43.

The Blind Men of Jericho Healed.

Matth. xx. (29) And as they were going forth from Jericho, a large crowd followed him. (30) And behold two blind men were sitting by the road, and hearing that Jesus passeth by, they cried out, saying, Have compassion on us, O Lord, son of David. (31) And the crowd rebuked them, that they should be silent, but they cried out louder, saying, Have pity on us, Lord, son of David. (32) And Jesus stood still, and spoke to them, and said, What do you wish me to do for you? (33) They say to him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. (34) And Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes were opened, and they followed him.

Mark x. (46) And they came out of Jericho, and as he was going forth from Jericho with his disciples and a considerable crowd, Bartimæus, the blind son of Timæus, sat by the road, begging. (47) And hearing that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out, and to say, Jesus, son of David, have pity on me. (48) And many rebuked him, that he should be silent, but he cried out much more, O son of David, have pity on me. (49) And Jesus stood still, and said that he should be called. And they call the blind man, saying to him, Take courage, rise up, he calleth thee. (50) And he, casting away his cloak, stood up, and came to Jesus. (51) And Jesus answered and said to him, What wilt thou that I should do for thee? And the blind man said to him, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight. (52) And Jesus said to him, Depart; thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus on the way.

Luke xviii. (35) And it came to pass that as he was drawing nigh to Jericho, a certain blind man sat near the road begging. (36) And hearing the crowd going along, he asked what it might be. (37) And they told him, Jesus the Nazarene is passing by. (38) And he cried

Digitized by Google

out, saying, Jesus, son of David, have pity on me. (39) And those who were in front reproved him, that he should be silent; but he cried out much more, saying, Son of David, have pity on me. (40) And Jesus stood still, and commanded that he should be brought to him. (41) And when he drew nigh, he asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I shall do for thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. (42) And Jesus said to him, Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee. (43) And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, praising God; and all the people who saw it gave praise to God.

§ 243. Two separate cases of healing are here related; one by Mark and Luke, and the other by Matthew. Jesus did not remain the whole time in the town, after entering it, and claiming the hospitality of Zacchæus; but he went out several times to instruct the people; and it was on these occasions that Jesus performed the cures by the sole action of his will, and by his magnetic power. He had no need to touch the eyes of the blind men; but he did so to show his disciples how to act in similar cases.

When Jesus cured the other blind man, Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, by merely saying, "Depart, thy faith hath saved thee;" he desired to make a strong impression on the multitude by exhibiting his power to men, and showing them how much sincere and ardent faith may hope for from the protection and mercies of the Lord. O men, blind of heart and intellect, have faith, and exclaim, "Lord, let our eyes be opened;" and you will recover your moral and spiritual sight; say with faith, "Master, make me to see," and you shall see; for the spiritual light shall enlighten the darkness around you, and cast its radiance on the straight and certain road which lies before you.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXI.—VERSES 1–17. MARK, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 1–11, 15–19. LUKE, CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 28-48.

Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem—The Temple Cleansed—Prophecy of the Destruction of Jerusalem.

Matth. xxi. (1) And when they drew nigh to Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, (2) Saying to them, Go into the village opposite us, and immediately you will find an ass bound, and a foal with her; loose them and bring them to me. (3) And if any one shall ask you anything, say, The Lord hath need of them; and immediately he will send them. (4) And all this

Digitized by Google

was done that the word through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, (5) Tell the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh to thee, mild and mounted upon an ass, and a foal, the offspring of a beast of burden. (6) And the disciples went and did as Jesus had commanded them. (7) They led the ass and the foal, and they laid their garments upon them, and he sat upon them. (8) And the great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut young branches from the trees, and scattered them on the road. (9) And the multitudes going before and behind cried out, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. (10) And when he came into Jerusalem, all the city was disturbed, saying, Who is this? (11) And the multitudes said, This is Jesus, the Prophet from Nazareth in Galilee. (12) And Jesus came into the Temple of God, and cast out all those who sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those who sold doves. (13) And saith to them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a robber's cave. (14) And the blind and lame came to him in the Temple, and he healed them. (15) And the chief priests and scribes seeing the wonders which he performed, and the children shouting in the Temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, were angry, and said to him, (16) Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith to them, Yea; hast thou never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? (17) And he left them behind, and came out of the city to Bethany, and lodged there.

Mark xi. (1) And when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, he sends two of his disciples, (2) And says to them, Go into the village opposite us, and just as you are entering it, you will find a foal bound, upon which no man has sat; loose him and bring him. (3) And if any one shall say to you, Why do you do this? you shall say, The Lord hath need of him; and immediately he will send him here. (4) And they went and found the foal tied at the door, outside in the street, and they loose him. (5) And some of those standing by said to them, What do ye, loosing the foal? (6) And they said to them as Jesus had commanded; and they let them go. (7) And they led the foal to Jesus, and laid their garments on it, and seated him on it. (8) And many spread their garments in the way, and others cut branches from the trees, and scattered them in the road. (9) And those going before and following after, cried out, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (10) Blessed is the kingdom coming in the name of the Lord, of our father David, Hosanna in the highest. (11) And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the Temple, and having looked round on all things, and evening being already come, he came out to Bethany with the twelve. (15) And they come to Jerusalem, and Jesus coming into the Temple began to cast out those who sold and bought in the Temple, and he overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of those who sold doves. (16) And would not permit that any one should carry any utensil through the Temple. (17) And he taught, saying to them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations? but you have made it a robber's cave. (18) And the Scribes and Pharisees heard it, and sought how they might destroy him, for they feared him, because all the multitude was astonished at his teaching. (19) And when it was late, he went out of the city.

Digitized by Google

Luke xix. (28) And saying these things, he departed thence, going up to Jerusalem. (29) And it came to pass that when they drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, and to the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying, (30) Go into the village opposite, and as you are entering, you will find a foal bound, upon which no man has ever sat; loose him, and bring him. (31) And if any one should ask you saying, Why do ye loose him? you shall say thus, The Lord has need of him. (32) And the messengers went and found it as he had said to them. (33) And while they were loosing the foal, his masters said to them, Why do you loose the foal? (34) And they said, The Lord has need of him. (35) And they led him to Jesus, and casting their garments on the foal, they mounted Jesus thereon. (36) And as he was going, they strewed their garments on the road. (37) And as they were drawing near to the descent of the Mount of Olives, all the multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and to praise God with a loud voice on account of all the great works which they had seen, saying, (38) Blessed is the King who cometh in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. (39) And certain of the Pharisees among the crowd said to him, Teacher, rebuke your disciples. (40) And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that if these should be silent, the stones would cry out. (41) And as they drew near, seeing the city, he lamented over it, saying, (42) If thou also hadst known, and in this thy day, the things which are for thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes. (43) For the days shall come upon thee that thy enemies shall cast a rampart round thee, and encompass and distress thee on every side; (44) And shall raze thee to the ground, and thy children in thee, and shall not leave in thee stone upon stone; because thou knewest not the time of thy punishment. (45) And coming into the Temple, he began to cast out those who bought and sold therein, (46) Saying to them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer; but you have made it a robber's cave. (47) And he was teaching daily in the Temple. And the chief priests and scribes, and the leading people sought to destroy him. (48) And could not find how they should do it, for all the people crowded round him to hear him.

§ 244. The general lesson here is that of the humility of Jesus. His entry was made triumphant by the enthusiasm awakened by his virtues, but it was not accompanied by any pomp or luxury. It was as simple and modest as the morality which he preached, and taught by his own example.

Do not trouble yourselves about the discrepancies between the narratives relating to the manner in which Jesus was mounted; for they do not affect any important facts. The ass was chosen, because it was the poor man's steed; and a young animal which had never been mounted was chosen to show that the most intractable could easily be brought beneath the Master's yoke.

Jesus drove the traders from the Temple. O Jesus, what

Digitized by Google

hast thou to do in places where everything is trafficked in; where gold dazzles the eyes, buys prayer and pardon, redeems crime, and makes a vile merchandise of the blessings of the Lord!

Jesus said, "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a robber's cave." These words signify, "Despise those who sell pardon and mercies, and impose upon credulity and ignorance; for they steal when they sell to others what they do not even possess themselves."

All the disciples who were preceding or following Jesus in the crowd, cried "Hosanna!" O let your voices rise towards the Lord, and they will stifle the repinings of earth! Hosanna to him who brings peace to the weak and lowly, and humbles the pride of the proud and arrogant!

(Matth. xxi. 1–7; Mark xi. 1–7; Luke xix. 28–35.)—We have often told you that the Gospel narratives complete each other. The she-ass was with the foal, which followed its mother. Jesus mounted the foal, but although he needed the foal only, he told his disciples to bring them both; for the traditions and prophecies were to be connected with the events of the Messianic era. Mark and Luke spoke only of the ass which served for the steed of the King who made his entry into Jerusalem. As regards the foreknowledge of Jesus of what would pass between his disciples and the owners, you must remember his origin and superior mission; and that everything was prepared beforehand by incarnations for his requirements. His prevision was due to the same cause as his knowledge of the hearts of men; he was always a spirit, under the human appearance which he had assumed for the purposes of his mission. Prevision can only take place with you under the medianimic influence of your guides, so long as you suffer material incarnation as it exists at present among your humanity; and this will be the case until matter becomes so subtle that the spirit can free itself from its bonds. The owners of the asses allowed them to be taken away. They were influenced by their guides, and yielded to their unconscious inspiration, without knowing

Digitized by Google

exactly why. Jesus knew beforehand that everything would happen thus. He knew the spirits who were incarnated to aid in the fulfilment of his mission; their degree of advancement, and their obedience to the inspirations of their guides.

(Matth. xxi. 4, 5;* Isaiah lxii. 1, 2, 11; Zachariah ix. 9.)—The words of the Evangelist and the Prophets were only to be explained in spirit and in truth by the New Revelation. Under the veil of the letter, they contain an allusion to the spiritual position of Jesus. Your King has come among you, for God has appointed him the ruler of your planet, and the director of its progress, and of that of your humanity.

(Matth. xxi. 8, 9; Mark xi. 8, 9; Luke xix. 36–38.)—The crowd around Jesus chose words of praise and allegiance which were awakened in their minds by the influence of the spirits of the Lord.

(Luke xix. 39, 40.)—This manifestation must have taken place; and if men had exerted their free-will to oppose it, the spirits who surrounded the Master would have caused voices to be heard singing the praises of him who was the Son of David, in the eyes of men.

(Luke xix. 41–44.)—The words of Jesus concerning the fate which awaited Jerusalem were prophetic, for they were in accordance with events to come. Jesus alluded to these events to impress the minds of men when the events themselves should be fulfilled. These words were also allegorical, in a spiritual point of view, relative to the children of Jerusalem, and as indicating, under a veil, the fate reserved for spirits who rebel against the voice of the Saviour. You know that the guilty man who has failed in his experiences must expiate his offences; and the faults of one incarnation often react upon many succeeding ones. This is why Jerusalem would have to weep over her obduracy; for the rebellious spirits who were her sons would be forced to expiate their crimes and wilful blindness.

* Compare also John xii. 14, 15.

Digitized by Google

(Matth. xxi. 10, 11.)—"When Jesus entered Jerusalem, all the city was agitated." Yes; and the surprise was great to see one so humble surrounded by so vast a multitude. His fame had preceded him; but they expected to see a learned man, with pomp and surroundings corresponding to his knowledge. Every one asked, "Who, then, is this?" They had long ago forgotten the young child who had taught the learned men in the Temple. Those who accompanied him, said, "This is Jesus the Prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." It is certain that Jesus never called himself God; and although his disciples were led to attribute divinity to Christ after the completion of his earthly mission, yet this was due to their interpreting his words "the Son of God," "My Father in the heavens," &c., literally; and to the miracles which he performed, and especially to his resurrection and subsequent appearances. They could not suppose that any being but an incarnate God could possibly perform all these miracles; and they interpreted his words literally, for it was necessary that it should be thus to attract the masses. The idols could not be destroyed without a visible and palpable God to replace them; a purely spiritual Deism would have been insufficient, and it was necessary to act according to the age, and the conditions and necessities of human progress.

When the needs of the age had changed, voices were raised to dispute the doctrine of the Trinity, which endeavoured to retain unity in plurality, and to uphold monotheism. But it only escaped polytheism by taking a pantheistic character. Others disputed the sacrifice of God, who sacrificed himself to himself to satisfy his own vengeance, and to redeem men whom he could either pardon, or redeem by his own free will. Do not find fault with this. Everything has its purpose in the course of time and human progress, according to the knowledge and wisdom of God; and every day has its own needs, and its own work.

Previous to the New Revelation which we bring you, men were incapable of receiving it. But we now free the

Digitized by Google

spirit from the letter, and explain in spirit and in truth, who Jesus Christ is.*

(Matth. xxi. 12–16; Mark xi. 11, 15–18; Luke xii. 45–48.)—All traffic in the kingdom of God is impious. Look back to Hebrew times. The Jews redeemed their faults by sacrifices, and the merchants first provided them with victims, and with vases containing perfumes, which were brought into the Temple, and sold there. Then the business became more extensive, and commercial transactions began in the House of God; and your Stock Exchanges, with their dishonest transactions, found a prototype in the Temple of Israel. We repeat with Jesus "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer but you have made it a robber's cave." The Spirit of Truth is about to fulfil these words of the Master by replacing the letter which killeth by the Spirit which giveth life.

The time is coming (and it has already come to all men who understand and practise the law of love, independently of all external rites and ceremonies) when men shall no longer worship the Father on the mountain, or in Jerusalem, but shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; and your earth will then be called a house of prayer for all nations. The spirits of the Lord, the messengers of the Spirit of Truth, are incarnate or errant spirits, who come to raise the veil which hides the truth from men, that what was secret may be known, and that what was hidden may be revealed. They work with the skill and prudence of the oculist who prepares a man to see the light, by operating on a cataract. They come to lead men to practise humility, disinterestedness, love, charity, self-renunciation, indulgence, pardon and forgetfulness of injuries and insults, and reciprocal devotion between and towards all. Thus they will lead men to the true fraternity which alone can and will create equality and liberty among all by sincere reciprocity and union, and will thus accomplish the regeneration of man, which the Master has predicted and promised. When this fraternal

* On the divinity attributed to Christ by men, compare the explanation subsequently given on John i. 1, 2.

Digitized by Google

unity shall be completed, the kingdom of God will be established. Then will your purified planet become the New Jerusalem, and Jesus will appear in all his spiritual glory as the visible sovereign of his equally purified creatures; Jesus, your Protector and Ruler, your Master and your King. Then, too, a great cry will arise from the regenerate men who have truly become brethren, who will raise together with one voice the hymn once sung by the crowd which accompanied Jesus on his entry into Jerusalem, "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heavens." And the spirits who shall have prepared and accomplished the regeneration and purification of your planet and its humanity, will sing the song of the angels who led the shepherds to the stable at Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace; good-will towards men."

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXI.—VERSES 18–22. MARK, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 12–14; 20–26.

The Barren Fig-Tree.

Matth. xxi. (18) And on returning to the city early in the morning, he was hungry. (19) And seeing a fig-tree by the road, he came to it, and found nothing on it but leaves only, and he says to it, Let there be no fruit from thee in due season. And immediately the fig-tree withered away. (20) And the disciples saw it, and wondered, saying, How quickly the fig-tree has withered away. (21) And Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, If you have faith, and doubt not, you shall not only do that which is done to this fig-tree, but even if you should say to this mountain, Be thou lifted up and cast into the sea, it shall be done. (22) And all those things which you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.

Mark xi. (12) And on the morrow, as they were going forth from Bethany, he was hungry. (13) And seeing a fig-tree from afar, having leaves, he went to it, if, perhaps, he might find something on it. And when he came to it, he found nothing on it but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. (14) And Jesus answered and said to it, Let no one eat a fig from thee in the season. And his disciples heard it. (20) And going past early, they saw the fig-tree withered up from the root. (21) And Peter remembering it, saith to him, Rabbi, behold the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away. (22) And Jesus answering saith to them, Have faith in God. (23) For verily I say unto you, that if any one shall say to this mountain, Be thou lifted up, and cast into the sea; and do not doubt in his heart, but shall have faith, that

Digitized by Google

what he says shall be done, it shall be to it as he shall say. (24) Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever which you shall ask in prayer, believe that you shall receive them, and it shall be unto you. (25) And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have somewhat against anyone, that your Father in the heavens may also forgive you your trespasses. (26) And if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in the heavens forgive your trespasses.

§ 245. In reading the Gospels, you should never confound what is related under medianimic influence of the words and actions of Jesus, and of the various spirit-manifestations, with the ideas, opinions, and impressions of men relative to his personality, nature, origin, words, and actions. Jesus wished to give his disciples a lesson. You are told that it was not the season for fruit; and he therefore knew that there was no fruit on the tree. Nevertheless he wished his Apostles and those who attended to his lessons to understand plainly that the tree which bears no fruit is condemned, and that man should labour unceasingly for his own progress and advancement, and for that of his brethren. The lesson was to be practical; the fig-tree is nothing; the lesson is everything; if a vine had stood there, he would have destroyed it for the same purpose. Jesus wished to act on minds, and not on matter. The disciples were ignorant of worldly science, but already intelligent in spiritual things, and understood the lesson, for they did not say to Jesus, "Why did you blast the tree which could not bear fruit out of season?" but only "How quickly the fig-tree has withered away!" To this Jesus replied, "Faith can accomplish everything." Was it not as much as to say that his strong will was the cause of what had surprised them? The example which Jesus gave was designed to impress the imagination of those who followed him, by leading them to see the necessity of always being useful. He also wished to teach them the power of the will when based upon faith; for it was necessary that after the Master had left them, they should be the obedient but unconscious instruments of the spirits of the Lord who aided them in the accomplishment of their mission. But considering the state of intelligence and the needs of the age, it was necessary that the lesson should be very forcible to be understood.

Digitized by Google

The time was still very distant when his words should be explained in spirit and in truth; and the bulk of the people were material, and required lessons which would impress them materially. You can now understand the phenomenon and its causes. On the mental command of Jesus, and by the influence of his will, the spirits who watch over vegetation instantly withdraw the fluids necessary for material vegetation, from the sap of the fig-tree, and the spiritual essence was removed to another place. The withdrawal of the vital fluids produced the same effect as the wind of the desert, which dries up every plant which it touches. The disciples immediately observed the effect upon the tree, and next day they stopped to examine it again. Thus the two narratives give a double series of words and lessons.

You should also understand the spirit of the words, "Let no fruit grow upon thee in the season," for they condemn the Catholic doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The man who is struck by the angel of deliverance when he least expects it, dies suddenly, like the fig-tree. Is it the body or the spirit which will continue its march towards perfection by expiation in the errant state, and then by reincarnation?

The withered fig-tree could yield no more fruit, but the spiritual principle was removed elsewhere, to continue its ascending course in the path of the infinite unity, where everything, according to the will of God, proceeds from the infinitely little to the infinitely great, under spiritual guidance, according to the operation of general and immutable laws, which are the very essence of the Uncreated Creator, and which you call the laws of Nature.

The parable of the barren fig-tree was intended to warn man to make use of the earthly existence which the Lord grants him, to expiate and repair his offences, and to progress with the aid of his guardian angel, and other good spirits. It warns him that the guilty spirit who remains deaf to their friendly inspirations, and rebels, notwithstanding the opportunities given him for expiation, reparation, and progress,

Digitized by Google

until the time when the darnel shall be separated from the good corn, will then no longer bear fruits on your earth, but will be cast down to inferior worlds corresponding with his degree of guilt, and to what is needful for his progress and advancement. Jesus shows you, on the one hand, the still remaining hope, and the spirits of the Lord persevering in the work, and interceding in favour of the criminal, until they shall have led him into the right path; but, on the other hand, he also shows you the ungrateful and barren nature which no effort can reach, and which must be removed from a scene where its existence could only be injurious.

We have already given you sufficient explanations of the symbolic meaning of the words spoken by Jesus to Peter and the other disciples.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXI.—VERSES 23–32. MARK, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 27–33. LUKE, CHAP. XX. VERSES 1–8.

Jesus silences the Chief Priests and Elders.

Matth. xxi. (23) And when he came into the Temple, the chief priests and elders of the people, came to him while he was teaching, saying, By what authority do you do these things, and who gave you this authority? (24) And Jesus answered and said to them, I will also ask you one question, and if you answer me, I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. (25) The baptism of John; whence was it? from heaven or from men? And they debated among themselves, saying, If we should say, From heaven, he will say to us, Why then did you not believe in him? (26) And if we should say, From men, we fear the people, for all regard John as a prophet. (27) And they answered Jesus, and said, We do not know. And he said to them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things, (28) But what think ye? A man had two children, and he went to one of them, and said, Child, go to-day and work in my vineyard. (29) And he answered and said, I do not like; but afterwards he repented, and went. (30) And going to the other he said the same, and he answered and said, I go, Lord; and he did not go. (31) Which of these two did the will of his father? They say to him, The first. Jesus saith to them, Verily I say to you, that the taxgatherers and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. (32) For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the taxgatherers and harlots believed him; but when you saw it, you did not afterwards repent and believe in him.

Mark xi. (27) And they come again to Jerusalem, and while he was walking about in the Temple, the chief priests and scribes and elders come

Digitized by Google

to him. (28) And say to him, By what authority doeth thou these things, and who gave thee authority to do them? (29) And Jesus answered and said to them, I will also ask you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. (30) Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men; answer me. (31) And they spoke among themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say, Why then did you not believe in him? (32) But if we shall say, From men, we fear the people, for all considered John to be a prophet. (33) And they answered and said to Jesus, We do not know, And Jesus said to them, Nor do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Luke xx. (1) And it came to pass on one of those days, as he was teaching the people in the Temple, and preaching the Gospel, the chief priests and scribes rose up with the elders of the people, and spoke to him, saying, (2) Tell us by what authority you do these things, and who it is who has given you this authority. (3) And he answered and said to them, I will also ask you one question, and answer me. (4) Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? (5) And they spoke together among themselves, saying, If we say, From heaven, he will say, Why then did you not believe in him? (6) But if we say, From men, all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet. (7) And they replied that they knew not whence it was. (8) And Jesus said to them, Nor do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

§ 246. Jesus spoke to those who had witnessed the actions of John without being reformed; and, who as they did not understand the source whence he derived his power, would be equally unable to understand, and still less disposed to admit the testimony of the Word. If Jesus had said that his power came from God, he would have provoked the priests, the Scribes and the Pharisees to hasten the moment which should terminate his mission. He therefore avoided answering their question directly; but you may find encouragement for the present, and promises for the future, in his words. He told his adversaries, "The tax-gatherers and harlots go into the kingdom of the heavens before you." These rebellious children were touched by repentance, and came, though late, to work in the vineyard of the Lord; but you, proud men, who hold the highest positions in the church, have said, "Lord, I come;" and you have delayed, and often even drawn back. You will arrive very late indeed in the kingdom of the heavens, for you must first understand your fault, and go into the vineyard of the Lord, and work very hard to make up for lost time; and when you arrive, the tax-gatherers and harlots who repented

Digitized by Google

at the time, and have finished their task, will be waiting to hold out their hands to aid you to enter. There are chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees in your own days; and they that have ears to hear, let them hear.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXI.—VERSES 33–41. MARK, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 1–9. LUKE, CHAP. XX. VERSES 9–16.

Parable of the Vineyard and the wicked Husbandmen.

Matth. xxi. (33) Hear another parable. A certain man who was a householder planted a vineyard, and hedged it round, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it to husbandmen, and went abroad. (34) And when the fruit season drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, to receive its fruits. (35) And the husbandmen seized upon his servants, and one they beat, and one they killed, and one they stoned. (36) Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did to them likewise. (37) And at last he sent his son to them, saying, They will reverence my son. (38) And the husbandmen seeing the son, said to each other, This is the heir; come let us kill him, and seize his inheritance. (39) And they seized him and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. (40) When, therefore, the Lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to these husbandmen? (41) They say to him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and hand over the vineyard to other husbandmen, who shall give up to him the fruits in their seasons.

Mark xii. (1) And he began to speak to them in parables. A man planted a vineyard, and hedged it round, and dug a wine-vat, and built a tower, and entrusted it to husbandmen, and went abroad. (2) And in the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that he should receive some of the fruit of the vineyard. (3) And they seized him and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. (4) And again he sent another servant to them, and him they stoned and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully treated. (5) And again he sent another, and him they slew; and many others, and some they beat, and some they killed. (6) But he had still one beloved son, and at last he sent him to them, saying, They will reverence my son. (7) But these husbandmen said to each other, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. (8) And they seized him and slew him, and cast him out of the vineyard. (9) What then will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and give the vineyard to others.

Luke xx. (9) And he began to tell the people this parable. A certain man planted a vineyard, and handed it over to husbandmen, and went abroad for a long time. (10) And in the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. And the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. (11) And again he sent another servant, and they beat him, and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. (12) And again he sent a

Digitized by Google

third, and they wounded him also, and cast him out. (13) And the Lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will reverence him when they see him. (14) And when the husbandmen saw him, they debated among themselves, saying, This is the heir; come let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. (15) And they cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. What then shall the lord of the vineyard do to them? (16) He will come and destroy those husbandmen, and will give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, May it not be thus!

§ 247. This parable is an emblem of the people of Israel. This is the vineyard which the Lord has planted; and the hedge which he made round it denotes the care which he took to preserve the remembrance of his name among the Hebrews. The wine-press which the householder dug in the ground is an allegorical expression used to complete the idea, and to show that nothing had been neglected that the vineyard should yield all that could be obtained from it. The fruit is gathered when it is ripe, but soon spoils, and the juice must be drawn from it by pressing and bruising the outward material part, to extract the wine, which does not change, but lasts for ever. The wine-press, as regards the Jews and other men, is the veiled emblem of experience, expiation, and reincarnation. The tower denotes the indestructible abode of the husbandmen, if they take care of the vineyard; the safe place where they would have preserved the juice of the grape when their labour should have brought it to the necessary quality and purity to be stored up in the tower. The season of ripe fruits is the period when the Jews should have been ready to yield fruits of justice, fit to be gathered for eternity. The servants of the master are the prophets who often came to remind men that they did not walk in the way which had been marked out for them. The fruit-season is near when men have received the lessons needful for their advancement, and ought to be able to profit by them. We need not point out to you the Father's beloved Son, ready, as it appeared to men, to sacrifice his life to yield up to the Father the ripe fruits of the vineyard. The rebellious husbandmen are the Jews from whom the Lord withdraws his protection; for they have destroyed him whom they ought to have loved and reverenced.

Digitized by Google

The husbandmen in the parable say, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." This is a material idea, which only shows man the actions which relate to his present life, and hides from him the consequences which his conduct will bring upon him. Such men only open their eyes to what is material, and shut fast the eyes of the soul. These words are designed to illustrate the blindness of those who persist in refusing to render to God the things which are God's, rejecting all the warnings which they have received, and have no fear of him whom they have offended and continue to offend by their ingratitude and obduracy.

Some of those to whom the words of the parable were applied are still living reincarnated on your earth. The words are applicable to all; to them as well as to you; and you may remember that Jesus said, "This generation shall not pass, until you shall see the Son of Man coming in his glory."* The husbandmen in the parable are not changed until the Son has been killed. They are the servants, the messengers of the Lord, who succeed one another, who are changed; and not the husbandmen. The Jewish nation represents the husbandmen, until the apparent death of Jesus. After the conclusion of his earthly mission, the vineyard was taken away from the wicked husbandmen, and given to others. You, Christians, have taken the place of the Jews, and have been the new husbandmen until now. The vineyard which the Lord has given into your charge is the entire humanity of your planet, both Jews and Gentiles. The hedge surrounding it is the law of love which he sent his beloved Son to preach to men by his teaching and example, that above all things you might become united, apart from all external forms of worship.

The new husbandmen are all who have been called to labour at their individual and collective progress by perfecting themselves and their brethren, and thus causing the vineyard to yield fruits of justice, charity, knowledge, and

* Matth. xxxiv. 34; Luke xxi. 32.

Digitized by Google

love. The wine-press, which is used to extract the essence from the material portion of the fruit, is reincarnation, which, as Jesus has said under the veil of the letter, is the only means by which the spirit who has failed can see God; for it is the only means of purification and progress which can lead him to regeneration, and enable him to attain to moral perfection. The tower is your planet, which should be the indestructible habitation of the husbandmen in charge of the vine, where they shall store the juice of the grape, when they have brought it to perfection.

The new husbandmen represent the new era, until your own times, under the veil of the letter. They have possessed the vineyard for a time, and after having rendered up the fruits in due season, thought at last, like their predecessors, that it belonged to them. As each fruit-season returns, they yield less and less, and at length they have come to a point when the vine scarcely produces anything, and the Father sends his servants again to demand the fruits which are his due. Do not refuse them, nor reject his servants, the errant or incarnate spirits who come in the name of the Master as messengers of the Lord to recall you to the practice of the simple and sublime morality of Christ. They come to lead you gradually to all truth, and to fraternal unity by the paths of justice, charity, knowledge, and love. Do not reject these servants, the organs of the Spirit of Truth, for then the justice of the Lord will fall upon you, and his Son will come, this time, to cast the guilty husbandmen out of the vineyard. These are they who do not yield up the fruits which they ought to cultivate; and then there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth among those who reject this third manifestation of the love of the Creator. The Son of Man has promised to return in his glory, to choose those worthy to be sons of the Father, as being good labourers in the vineyard. When the time has come for the regeneration of your planet (and it is not far off) men will be separated, as you have been told, and the good will be set on the right hand of the Lord. That is, they will remain on your planet when it is ready to become

Digitized by Google

one of the superior worlds. The wicked will be placed on his left, and will be cast into outer darkness. That is, they will first be subjected to expiation in the errant state, and will then be cast down to one of the inferior planets. While this process of the separation of the darnel from the good corn, which will accompany and complete the purification of your earth, is taking place, you must expect to see a renovation of the material race of your globe. This can only be effected by the destruction of the gross matter which envelopes you, which will be gradually replaced by a less and less material essence which will cover your spirit, and bring it nearer and nearer to the fluidic state. But do not suppose that this great change will take place instantaneously. You know that time has no limits to the Lord, and there is no difference to him between yesterday and to-morrow. Every phase of your renovation will be marked by what you call public calamities or plagues. Then the wicked husbandmen will be cast out; and the master of the vineyard is the Lord, who will come when his kingdom is established in all hearts, and will dwell among you; for God reigns in the hearts of the pure.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXI.—VERSES 42–46. MARK, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 10–12. LUKE, CHAP. XX. VERSES 17–19.

Continuation of the Parable of the Husbandmen in the Vineyard—Jesus the Chief Corner-Stone.

Matth. xxi. (42) Jesus says to them, Have you never read in the Scriptures, A stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner? This was of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes. (43) Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. (44) And whoever shall fall upon this stone shall be dashed to pieces, and upon whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder. (45) And when the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables, they knew that he spoke of them. (46) And when they sought to seize him they feared the multitude, for they looked upon him as a prophet.

Mark xii. (10) Have you not read this text, A stone which the builders rejected, this has been placed in the head of the corner? (11) This was of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes. (12) And they

Digitized by Google

sought to seize upon him, and they feared the people, for they knew that he spoke the parable against them. And they left him and departed.

Luke xx. (17) And he looked upon them, and said, What then is this that is written, A stone which the builders rejected, this is placed in the head of the corner? (18) And every one who falls upon this stone shall be dashed to pieces, and on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. (19) And the chief priests and Scribes sought to lay hands upon him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they knew that he had spoken this parable against themselves.

§ 248. The words of Jesus, spoken under cover of the parable, are equally applicable to all ages, and apply to the Scribes and Pharisees of your own days, as well as to those who heard them spoken. He addressed himself to the human period of their life as well as to that of yours.

Jesus personifies the law of love which he preached to men by his teaching and example, and by his doctrine, which is the proclamation, veiled by the letter, of eternal truths. He tells you that it is not his doctrine, but the doctrine of him who sent him. He is the chief corner-stone. Those who reject the stone which is given them to build the edifice which should shelter them throughout eternity, reject the chief corner-stone, which ought to support them; and they dash themselves against it. The Jews rejected Jesus, the messenger and the anointed of the Lord, and they dashed themselves against the stone which should endure for ages on ages. Do not reject it likewise, for the same fate would fall upon yourselves. Spiritism is not the personification of Christ, but his thought, and the continuation and end of his work. Now that the time has come for the reign of the letter which killeth to be replaced by that of the Spirit which giveth life, Jesus, after coming among you himself, sends you the Spirit of Truth, by the spirits of the Lord, his errant or incarnate missionaries. He thus continually sends the servants of the Father to you.

Do not dash yourselves against this foundation-stone of your eternal happiness, and thus cause yourselves to be cast into outer darkness. Do not give yourselves over to death, for the retrogression of the material faculties, which are buried in the fleshly sepulchre which entombs the soul, is hell, with all its terrors and tortures, to the spirit.

Digitized by Google

In the language of the parable, Jesus tells the chief priests, Scribes and Pharisees, "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a people bringing forth the fruits thereof." This kingdom is indeed taken from all men who are proud, selfish, avaricious, sensual, intolerant, ambitious, fanatical, or materialistic; for such vices, and the predominance of matter, or giving way to material appetites, are so many obstacles to the progress, development, and perfection of the Spirit.

On the other hand, the kingdom of God is given to all men, who (although they may not have seen, or been able to comprehend the light) have entered sincerely on the new path which Christ has opened. The Spirit of Truth has come to guide you to follow it safely and surely, and it will be given to all who, though they may have dwelt far from the Church, and lived at any period, have entered (apart from all external forms of worship) into the sanctuary of the just by practising the law of love, and bow themselves before the great Creator with gratitude and humility, and thus bring forth the fruits of justice and charity.

New workers in the vineyard, know that the vineyard which has been entrusted to you is all mankind. Cause it to bring forth its fruits, and hold yourselves always ready at each returning season to give them up to the servants whom the Lord sends to demand them. The commandment is, "Love one another." Teach your brethren on earth that the condition of the personal progress of each and all is collective progress; and that it will be rendered to each according to his works. Work actively and unceasingly at fraternal unity by gathering all men under your banner of love and charity. Wave the spiritual light above your heads that it may spread its radiance further and further to all points of your globe, and enlighten your humanity on its origin, its aims, and its destiny. Teach and propagate, by word and example, the law of love, and the material way of practising it according to moral and intellectual order, and thus prepare for the advent of the Spirit, and the fulfilment of the promised time when men shall no more worship

Digitized by Google

the Father on the mountain, nor in Jerusalem, but shall reject all the commandments of men, and follow only the commandments of God, which his Christ proclaimed as including all the law and the prophets. Men will be the true worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, when they are made one by the communion of thoughts, hearts and actions, and are closely united by the practice of love and fraternity. They will then assemble, in the name of Jesus, who will be in the midst of them, to worship their Creator by mutual prayer and instruction, under the leadership of the most worthy, and the most deserving, as the most advanced morally and intellectually, who will be unanimously chosen, for the Holy Spirit will really be with men when they have thus become true members of the Church of Christ.

LUKE, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 1–6.

Cure of Dropsy.

(1) And it came to pass that he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on the Sabbath, to eat bread, and they were watching him closely. (2) And behold there was a certain man in his presence who had the dropsy. (3) And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? (4) And they were silent. And he took him and healed him, and sent him away. (5) And he answered them, and said, If the ox or ass of one of you should fall into a well, will he not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath-day? (6) And they were not able to answer him again to these things.

§ 249. The sick man was brought into the presence of Jesus as a snare, to tempt him; so that if Jesus obeyed his generous impulses, and healed him, he might be accused of breaking the Sabbath, while if his scrupulous observance of the Sabbath stood in the way, he might be accused of want of charity. We have already given you sufficient explanations both respecting the Sabbath, and the magnetic character of the cures performed by Jesus. Men will not seek for causes to understand and explain effects. What is the primary cause of dropsy? A thinness of the blood, from diminution of the chyle, which is replaced by watery par-

Digitized by Google

ticles. It is often caused by privations or excesses which alter the quality of the blood. Well-directed magnetic human action may check the progress of this decomposition, and effect a cure; but time and perseverance are needed for this, for the instruments are not yet sufficiently pure to transmit the fluids which they employ in their full strength. Jesus, who was a perfect magnetizer, employed the healing principles in all their purity, and consequently with full efficacy. You are not told that the swelling produced by the disease ceased immediately, but that the patient was cured. The evil was destroyed, and equilibrium was then re-established in consequence of the magnetic action of Jesus, and the fluids which he had directed into the organism. The disease had reached one of its last phases, and the patient was too weak to move. Jesus sent him away, having given him strength to retire, which was the prelude of the visible cure; the subsidence of the swelling.

LUKE, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 7–11.

Humility.

(7) And he spoke a parable to those who were bidden, noticing how they chose out the first places, (8) When you are invited by anyone to a wedding, do not sit down in the chief place, lest he should have invited a more honourable man than you. (9) And he who invited you both, should come and say to you, Give up your place to this man; and then you begin with shame to take the last place. (10) But when you are invited, go and sit down in the last place, that when he who invited you shall come, he may say to you, Friend, go up higher; then you will have honour among those who are sitting with you. (11) For every one who shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and he who humbleth himself shall be exalted.

§ 250. Jesus frequently repeats this lesson of humility under various forms in different times and places, because humility is the source of all virtues, all progress, and all moral and intellectual elevation; whereas pride is the most difficult vice to uproot from the heart of man, and the chief cause of the vices which degrade the spirit, and of the falls and sufferings which it endures.

Digitized by Google

LUKE, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 12–15.

Disinterestedness.

(12) And he also said to him who invited him, When you make a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, nor brothers, nor relations, nor rich neighbours, lest they invite you again, and a return be made you. (13) But when you make a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind; (14) And you shall be blessed, for they cannot recompense you; but you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. (15) And a certain man among the guests hearing this, said, Blessed is whosoever shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

§ 251. Man is always liable to think exclusively of himself, and the good which he does is often regarded as a loan on which he expects large interest. If you look into most human actions, you will discern the desire of being paid for what is done; either by the gratitude of the recipient of your bounty, or by the praise of the world, or by the merit of the action in the sight of God. These motives, especially the last, may be noble; but they ought not to be exclusive. You never ought to consider the advantage which you may derive from a good thought or action. Your chief aim should be to show your gratitude to the Lord. What would you say to your child if he would not fulfil any of his duties towards you, or towards his brothers and sisters, without directly coming to say, "I have done that; what reward will you give me?" Would you not answer, "The first reward is that of duty performed. In acting thus, you have fulfilled but a very small part of your duty, and you have taken away its merit by ascribing too much to it, and asking for a reward, at the promptings of pride or selfishness."

Do not stop at the letter which killeth, but always seek for the Spirit which giveth life, in the words of Jesus. He certainly does not condemn family and social gatherings, but teaches humility, always and everywhere, in the great human family. He taught men that the luxury, ostentation, and pride of festivals, based on self-interest, vanity, and sensuality, squander superfluous wealth which should be given to the poor, who lack what is needful in the material, moral, and intellectual order. These useless feasts should be

Digitized by Google

replaced by feasts of material charity which sustain the body by food, clothing, and shelter; and moral charity, which nourishes and develops the soul. Jesus adapted his language to the intelligence of material men that he might make a strong impression upon them.

(Verses 13–15.)—These words are easily intelligible. From a human point of view, they relate to those who share the happiness of the life of the just; and as every thought of material men links itself to matter, the idea of celestial feasts presented itself to the mind of the Jew. The resurrection of the just is the return of the just man to his country. He who has lived in the sight of the Lord during his human pilgrimage will then be received by the Lord. As regards the spirit, the resurrection of the just is its exemption from the necessity of returning to the lower worlds of trials and expiations, and its admission to worlds superior to yours.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSE 1–14. LUKE, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 16–24.

Parable of the Feast.

Matth. xxii. (1) And Jesus again answered and spoke to them in parables, saying, (2) The kingdom of the heavens shall be likened to a man who was a king, who prepared wedding feasts for his son. (3) And he sent his servants to summon those who were invited to the feasts, and they would not come. (4) Again he sent other servants, saying, Tell those who were invited, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come to the wedding-feasts. (5) And they took no heed of it, and went away; one to his own field, and one to his business. (6) And the remainder seized his servants, and assaulted them and slew them. (7) And when the king heard it, he was angry, and sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city. (8) Then he saith to his servants, The wedding indeed is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. (9) Therefore go out to the outlets of the roads, and invite whoever you find to the feasts. (10) And those servants went out into the roads, and assembled all whom they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was provided with guests. (11) And the king coming in to see the guests, saw a man there who had not put on a wedding garment. (12) And he says to him, Comrade, how did you come in here without having a wedding garment? And he was silenced. (13) Then the king said to the attendants, Bind his feet and hands, and take him and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. (14) For many are called, but few are chosen.

Digitized by Google

Luke xiv. (16) And he said to him, A certain man made a great feast, and invited many. (17) And he sent his servant at the time of the feast to say to those who were invited, Come, for all things are now ready, (18) And all at once began to make excuses. The first said to him, I have bought a field, and I am obliged to go and see it; I pray thee have me excused. (19) And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them; I pray thee have me excused. (20) And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. (21) And this servant went and told his master these things. Then the householder was angry, and said to his servant, Go out quickly into the squares and streets of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind. (22) And the servant said, Lord, I have done as thou hast commanded, and there is still room. (23) And the master said to his servant, Go out into the roads and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. (24) For I say unto you that none of those men who were invited shall taste of my feast.

§ 252. The meaning of these two parables is the same, although they were spoken by Jesus at different times and places. Their meaning is similar to that of the parable of the wicked husbandmen in the vineyard. The king who invited guests to his son's wedding, and the householder who made a great feast, represent the Lord, who calls to himself those who are reared in the knowledge of his name, and who should come without delay to share in the joys of eternal life. Those who do not respond to his appeal are those who have heard the voice of the messengers of the Lord, and have not answered, but have rejected them. Then divine justice falls upon the ungrateful ones, and they are rejected until they have recognized and expiated their offences.

The servant of the householder is sent into the squares and streets of the city to seek for the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind to bring them to the great feast. After he has done so, and there is still room left, he is sent out again to the roads and hedges to compel all others to enter, that the house may be filled. All men, whoever they are, should partake of the heavenly feast, and should advance morally and intellectually, to become rich in heart and intelligence by humility, knowledge, charity, and love, to recover the freedom of their faculties, and to walk in the path of progress. They then recover the spiritual life of the soul, and see the light more and more, as they advance

Digitized by Google

safely and surely, towards perfection. But you are also told in the parable of the wedding of the king's son, that it is needful to be clothed in a wedding garment before being admitted to the feast. The king's servants are sent out into the roads to gather together the good and bad. All alike were summoned to the wedding-feast, but before entering the banqueting-hall they were required to lay aside their soiled garments. This is the indispensable condition, and whoever does not conform to it will be cast into outer darkness; that is, he will be banished to the inferior planets, far from those happy regions where the spirits who have clothed themselves in wedding garments by regeneration, will complete their purification until the moment when they shall attain perfection, and assume the spotless robe which alone permits them to enter the eternal palace, in those pure, celestial, and divine spheres where none can approach or dwell but pure spirits.

Jesus spoke of only one man being found among the guests without a wedding garment, although the king's servants had assembled all, both bad and good, and the hall was full; to show, under cover of the parable, that, when all alike are called, nearly all will understand the happiness which is before them, and only a very small minority will be hardened, and will resist the efforts of the servants of God to induce them to assume the wedding garment before entering the banqueting hall.

(Matth. xxii. 13.)—This will be the fate of those who have answered the call, but who have not exerted themselves sufficiently to enter worthily into the presence of the Master, as well as of those who refuse to come to the wedding. Indeed, that man is the most guilty of all who listens to the voice of the messengers, and answers, "Here I am;" but who fails to render himself worthy to appear in the presence of him who has called him.

(Matth. xxii. 14.)—These words apply not only to the man who was rejected because he was not fittingly clothed, but to all who had previously closed their ears and hearts to the voice which called them. Those who endeavour to

Digitized by Google

explain the meaning of the words of Jesus, should remember that while applying to future ages, they have also a present and positive application which might impress the material spirits to whom they were addressed. Jesus left the advantages of reincarnation under a veil. He could not then say, "Those who refused to enter the banqueting hall, and who beat, ill-treated, and slew the messengers of the Lord, were the same as those who were afterwards assembled from the roads, and assumed the wedding garments with joy. Those who were invited as guests to the great supper by the householder's servant, because everything was ready, and who refused to come, were the same as the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind who were afterwards brought from the squares and streets of the town; or the same as those who were found on the roads and by the hedgerows, and were compelled to enter that the house might be filled." If Jesus had thus spoken, men would have said, "Why need we hurry? The banqueting hall will always be open to us; we can always enjoy the supper which is always ready, and we shall always be invited to share in it."

These material spirits were incapable of understanding that although it has long been true to say of your humanity that many are called, but few are chosen, all must be chosen, during the period comprised in eternity. They were incapable of understanding the conditions by which the guilty spirit, who, like all others, has been called, may eventually succeed in being chosen, under the action of the immutable law of suffering, expiation, and progress, which is accomplished by re-birth, and which leads the guilty spirit in the ascending course of successive and progressive lives, from the primitive worlds to the worlds of trials and expiations, and from these to the regenerative worlds where it assumes the wedding garment, to enter the happy worlds. When it has once assumed this stainless robe, and has attained to moral perfection, it passes on to the celestial or divine worlds, and becomes one of the elect of God, by taking rank among the pure spirits. The hour of the spiritual revelation had not yet arrived; and many centuries

Digitized by Google

were still to pass before your own days, the predicted era of the regeneration which is now being prepared by the Spirit of Truth.

These parables applied to the Jews as neighbours and invited guests of the Lord; and (correlatively, as the Jews understood) to the Gentiles, as those who were assembled, good and bad, poor, maimed, lame, and blind, in the squares and streets of the town, and afterwards along the roads and hedges. They apply also to the age in which you are now living, when those who ought to have listened to the voices of the servants, during so many ages, are deaf and indifferent; and to those whom the Spirit of Truth is about to unite in one assembly, animated by one thought only, to assume the same robe of purity. It is now that in the whole banqueting hall, "only one" will be found unworthy to remain. That is, compared to the number of those who accept the invitation with joy, very few will not seek to make themselves worthy to share in the feast.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSES 15–22. MARK, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 13–17. LUKE, CHAP. XX. VERSES 20–26.

God and Cæsar.

Matth. xxii. (15) Then the Pharisees went and consulted together how to entrap him in his talk. (16) And they sent to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man, for thou dost not regard the face of men. (17) Therefore tell us, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? (18) And Jesus knowing their wickedness, said to them, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? (19) Shew me the tribute money. (20) And they brought him a denarius. And he says to them, Whose image and superscription is this? (21) They say to him, Cæsar's. Then he says to them, Render then to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's. (22) And when they heard it, they were astonished, and they went away, and left him.

Mark xii. (13) And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and Herodians, that they might catch him in his talk. (14) And they came and said to him, Teacher, we know that thou art true and dost not trouble thyself about anybody, for thou dost not regard the face of men, but teachest the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, or not? Shall we give, or not give? (15) And he, seeing their

Digitized by Google

hypocrisy, said to them, Why do you tempt me? Bring me a denarius, that I may see it. (16) And they brought it, and he says to them, Whose image and superscription is this? And they said unto him, Cæsar's. (17) And Jesus answered and said to them, Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's. And they wondered at him.

Luke xx. (20) And they watched him, and sent spies that they might find fault with him in his talk, that they might deliver him over to the rule and authority of the governor. (21) And they asked him, saying, Teacher, we know that thou speakest and teachest rightly, and acceptest not the face, but teachest the way of God in truth. (22) Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? (23) And perceiving their villany, he said to them, Why tempt ye me? Show me a denarius. (24) Whose image and superscription is this? And they answer him, Cæsar's. (25) And he said to them, Render therefore to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's. (26) And they could not lay hold of his speech before the people, and they wondered at his answer, and were silent.

§ 253. These words should prove to all that whatever has been pretended, Jesus did not come to preach the overthrow of society, but only moral progress. Man can and ought to combine his duties as a citizen with his duties towards his Creator. Respect for the laws is a duty, and often a trial to men. Let the conduct of man be such as to ameliorate those laws which press hardly, and to lighten the burden which he bears with so many sufferings and complaints, and with so much insubordination and rebellion. Let everyone work at the reforms which are suited to his position; the monarch as well as the humble artisan; and the yoke will break of itself, for it will be so much lightened that man will no longer feel it, and the laws will become mild to all, for everyone will walk straight in his own path, without needing to be forcibly kept in it.

If the authorities oppress you, and the laws seem unjust, you should nevertheless submit. Neither revolutions, nor downcast thrones nor broken laws will give you liberty; for liberty springs from obedience, duty, purity of heart, and love and charity, which imply and include self-respect, and respect for others. When you understand the power of love and charity practised aright, and the manner of practising them in their principles and consequences, in all their aspects and applications in the physical, moral, and intellectual order, both as regards social, family, and private

Digitized by Google

life; and when all your thoughts and actions are conformed to this, you will have solved the great problem of liberty for all, and will have attained the end for which you have shed so much blood to no purpose, and for which so much blood has yet to flow.* Liberty, fraternity, and equality: these words, whence spring all the social disorders which dethrone kings, and crush down nations, are nevertheless the sons of love and charity, and it is only by this holy union that you can attain to them, now and for ever.

§ 254. How can we reconcile the words, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's," with the revolutions and changes which take place among nations and governments?

Pause and reflect. Have you yet arrived at the point where you ought to be, and must you not be renovated before you can attain the end? If you understand to-day, the work of redemption would not have to be postponed to to-morrow, but how great is your blindness, although you consider yourselves so enlightened! You are still of those who shed blood to fertilize the ground; who kindle war to obtain peace, and who burn down that you may build up again. Blind as you are, have you yet arrived at the point where you can see your way clearly? Deaf as you are, have you reached the point where you can hear your true interests? Ah, if you would but listen to our voices, and if all would practise that love and charity which we preach, fire and sword would no longer blaze in your hands, blood would no longer flow in your gutters, and your harvests would no longer be destroyed, and the horrors of famine would no longer devour the ear and the flower, the oak and the blade of grass. But answer this: Are you charitable? Do you love one another? Do you love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourselves?

The words of Jesus, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's," are words of the future; many centuries must pass away before they will be rightly understood and practised. It is

* These words were medianimically dictated in August, 1863.

Digitized by Google

not so yet; but they will be fulfilled when you and Cæsar render to God the things which are God's by practising the double love of God and the neighbour. Then will fraternity lead to equality and liberty for yourselves and all others, in peace and order, and in the hierarchy which will have its source, principle, and rules only in the degree of purity, and moral and intellectual progress which you have acquired.

§ 255. Is it correct to say that the temporal power has overthrown the spiritual power by these principles?

If the words of Jesus had been rightly understood, the temporal power of the Popes would never have existed, and the struggle between the heads of the Church and the princes of the earth, would never have taken place; and discord, hatred, and war would never have found entrance among the children of the Lord. If the words of Jesus had been rightly understood, the Church would always have walked in the paths of humility, disinterestedness, and love, and would always have rendered to Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. From the example which she would thus have given of every duty and virtue towards God and man, in social, family, and private life, she would always have lived in harmony with Cæsar. She would have taught and exhorted all men, both by precept and example, to practise material, moral, and intellectual tolerance, charity, justice, love, and fraternity. She would have urged men on to labour and study, and the desire of personal and collective progress through knowledge, humility, disinterestedness, and love. She would have taught them to seek for liberty in the truth of the Lord, which is the inheritance which he has given to man, in liberty of thought and understanding. Liberty of conscience, reason, and free examination, lead to the search for truth in the successive and progressive revelations, in order more and more to fulfil the words of Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and who was to be the object of the contradictions of men. "There is nothing secret which shall not be known, and nothing hidden which shall not be known, and proclaimed in public."

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSES 23-33. MARK, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 18-27. LUKE, CHAP. XX. VERSES 27-40.

The Resurrection.

Matth. xxii. (23) In that day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and asked him saying, (24) Teacher, Moses said, If any one shall die childless, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed to his brother. (25) And there were among us seven brothers, and the first having married, died, and having no issue, left his wife to his brother. (26) Likewise the second and the third up to the seventh. (27) And last of all the woman died also. (28) Therefore in the resurrection whose wife will she be of the seven, for they all had her? (29) And Jesus answered and said, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. (30) For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven. (31) And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, (32) I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. (33) And the multitudes hearing this were astonished at his teaching.

Mark xii. (18) And the Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him, saying, (19) Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if any one's brother should die and leave a wife, without having had children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother. (20) There were seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and died, leaving no issue. (21) And the second took her and died, and he also left no issue. And the third in like manner. (22) And the seven took her and left no issue. Last of all, the woman died also. (23) In the resurrection, when they shall arise, whose wife shall she be, for the seven had her to wife? (24) And Jesus answered and said to them, Do ye not err on this account, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God? (25) For when they shall arise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in the heavens. (26) And concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, that God spoke to him at the bush, saying, I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? (27) God is not the God of the dead but of the living; therefore do ye greatly err.

Luke xx. (27) And certain of the Sadducees came to him, who deny that there is a resurrection, and asked him, (28) Saying, Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if any one's brother shall die, having a wife, and he shall die childless, that his brother shall take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother. (29) Then there were seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and died childless. (30) And the second took the wife and he died childless. (31) And the third took her, and in like manner the seven also. (32) And they left no children, and died; and last of all the woman died also. (33) Therefore in the resurrection whose wife will she be? for the seven had her to wife. (34) And Jesus answered and said to them, The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. (35) But they who shall be accounted worthy to win that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in

Digitized by Google

marriage. (36) For neither can they die henceforth; for they are like the angels, and are the sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection. (37) And that the dead rise again, Moses also testifies at the bush, when he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. (38) And God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him. (39) And certain of the Scribes answered and said, Teacher, thou hast spoken well. (40) And after that, they did not dare to ask him anything.

§ 256. Are not these verses intelligible in themselves, and is not the language of Jesus clear and precise? He teaches faith in eternal life, apart from anything relating to matter. The Resurrection is the final return to the eternal country, at the time when the spirit has arrived at so high an elevation that it is no longer necessary for it to inhabit material worlds, or for reincarnation to take place according to the laws of reproduction, as is the case at present on your earth. The man whose spirit has risen above these phases of material incarnations cannot die any more, for in these exalted conditions incarnation, or rather incorporation, is effected by the spirit himself, and he appears suddenly upon the planet. When the spirit quits the superior world which he inhabits, he changes the conditions of his existence by returning to spiritual life, but he is not dead in the human sense in which Jesus used the word, and according to the meaning in which you still employ it on your earth. "The angels," to whom the dead shall be equal when they have risen again, and been deemed worthy to become the sons of God, signify both the good spirits who have arrived at the lofty conditions of which we have just spoken, and the pure spirits.

As Spiritists, you can readily understand the conclusion of the answer of Jesus to the Sadducees. When God sent a superior spirit to say to Moses in his name, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," did not the words imply that they were still living; and would he have spoken thus if the soul or spirit did not survive the body? Thus God proclaimed the survival of the soul, and its immortality and individuality after bodily death; and the permanent and immortal life of spirits, who all live under the Father's eye either in the corporeal or in the spiritual state.

Digitized by Google

Jesus endorsed this teaching afresh, when he reminded the Sadducees and his disciples, and through them all men, of these words. Thus God prepared future generations to understand that spiritual life is the primitive and normal state of the spirit, and that death is nothing more than the end of a temporary exile, when the spirit lays aside the body, which was only a covering assumed for trials, reparation, and progress, and which brought with it only a momentary change in his normal life.

The Sadducees were the materialists of that age. They regarded God as the Architect who rears the building, and man as the stone which crumbles into powder with the lapse of time. Are there not some among you whose reasoning is equally fallacious; men who admit the existence of God, but who deny the existence and immortality of the soul?

§ 257. How was the manifestation related in Ex. iii. 1–6 accomplished?

As God does not communicate directly with men, it was a spirit-manifestation. You are not told that Moses saw God, but only heard his voice. The superior spirit sent by the Lord assumed a luminous, but not a human form, and produced a dazzling light. Moses was a physical, clairaudient, and clairvoyant medium, but had it been otherwise, he would equally have witnessed what took place. You know that when a spirit has arrived at perfection, and become perfectly pure, he is the master of nature, and can bend all the fluids to his will, according to necessity and circumstances. The superior spirit produced a dazzling light, which led Moses to believe that the bush was on fire; and likewise an articulate human voice, by his command of the fluids, and by means of his perisprit, which he had assimilated to your earthly regions.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSES 34–40. MARK, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 28–34. LUKE, CHAP. X. VERSES 25–28.

Love of God and of the Neighbour.

Matth. xxii. (34) And the Pharisees hearing that he had silenced the Sadducees, gathered around him, (35) And one of them, a teacher of the Law, questioned him, tempting him, and saying, (36) Teacher, what command in the Law is great? (37) And Jesus said to him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (40) On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

Mark xii. (28) And one of the Scribes came to him, having heard them debating together, and perceiving that he answered well, he asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? (29) And Jesus answered and said to him, This is the first of all the commandments. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. (30) And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment. (31) And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; no other commandment is greater than these. (32) And the Scribe said to him, In truth, Teacher, thou hast spoken well; for God is one, and there is none other but him. (33) And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love the neighbour as thyself is better than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. (34) And when Jesus saw that he replied intelligently, he said to him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no one after that dared to ask him anything.

Luke x. (25) And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying, Teacher, what shall I do that I may gain age-long life? (26) And he said to him, What is written in the Law? how readest thou? (27) And he answered and said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. (28) And he said to him, Thou hast answered rightly; do this and thou shalt live.

§ 258. Love the Lord your God above all things. He is the source and life of all that exists; he is the just and tender Father of all that lives; he is the just judge of all your actions. Love the Lord your God above all things, for this love will give you strength to fulfil all your duties, and to acquire all virtues. The love of God is the strength of the soul to which he has given the hope of eternal life; and it is the hope born of faith which kindles your hearts, and gives birth to charity.

Digitized by Google

Love your neighbour as yourself, for if you do not possess this great fraternal love, you will be destitute of the actions to which it leads, and will be unfruitful branches. The love of God leads to submission, resignation, and hope; and it is practised by reverence for the laws of God. The love of one's neighbour as one's self leads to charity, and without charity you would be devoid of works. Charity is the aid which you extend to your brethren with intelligence and feeling, by the right hand which lets not the left know what is done.

You must be gentle and humble to be charitable, for pride repels the poor, and however great his poverty, it makes your aid, whether material, intellectual, or moral, painful to him. You must be gentle and humble to be charitable, for charity and humility move the most intractable, encourage the most timid, comfort the most afflicted, and purify the foulest; but let not your humility and charity be that of the lips only, for you would then be no longer charitable. When you help the man who has no bread to eat, do not let him know that you have more than you require, nor let him think that you are only fulfilling a duty; but instead of this, say, "My brother, I am glad to be able to come to your aid to-day, and I hope you will not forget me when you may be able to help me in your turn." When you help the man whose intelligence is darkened, do not let him perceive the extent of your light. Do not dazzle or humiliate him, but say, "My brother, I know very little, but I am ready to teach you what I know, if you do not know it; do as much for me, for you can render me a like service." When you help the man who requires the support of your sympathy, do not let him feel that you lend to him to receive a hundred-fold what you advance, but say, "My brother, I love thee because thou art the son of my Father; I love thee because thou art suffering; thy tears make me weep, and thy sorrows likewise afflict me. Love me as I love thee; and let me find in thy heart the echo of what vibrates in mine, for it is in love alone that we find courage and strength to go to Him who is all love. The source is near him and with him, but

Digitized by Google

it flows forth in incalculable streams, and bathes us in its freshness. I am happy in loving thee, if thou lovest me."

Never let your inferiors, whoever they may be, feel that you are aware of your superiority. Never let them know that you understand the value of the love and service which you render them, for then the service would oppress them, and the love would freeze them.

Love God above all things. This is to submit to all the laws which are included in love; it is to love your neighbour as yourself. Love God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is to love him with all your thoughts, above all things, and to love all things for love of him.

We call your special attention to the words spoken by Jesus to the lawyer, and to the reply of the latter. The Master approved his reply, and proclaimed its wisdom by saying, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Yes; that man is not far from the kingdom of God (or, in other words, is making rapid progress in the path which leads to moral perfection) who believes that the Lord God of Israel is the only God, that there is but one indivisible God, and none but he, and who loves him above all things, and his neighbour as himself. He perceives that this double love is greater than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices, for he is then the worshipper of the Father in spirit and in truth, loving all men as his brethren, and acting like a brother towards them, apart from all external forms of religion. He is the true worshipper of the Father, because he practises the two commandments which he recognizes as including all the law and the prophets, and which thus constitute but one—the whole of the Divine Law in its principles and consequences; the one only religion of God, the universal religion of humanity which is destined to lead men to unity, by fellowship and fraternity, and thus to the fulfilment of their destinies.

To love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourself is greater than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices, This is equally true in all ages. The external symbols of religion whatever are nothing in the sight of God; but

Digitized by Google

works are everything. "All the Law and the Prophets are contained in these two commandments." Their practice leads man to fulfil all his material, moral, and intellectual duties in the great human family, from every point of view, both in social, family, and private life. "Do this, and thou shalt live." Such works lead rapidly to eternal life; that life where the spirit walking in the paths of moral perfection, no longer dies, being freed from the bonds of matter, and the restraints of the flesh.

By repeating the words of Deuteronomy (vi. 5), "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord," and by saying to the lawyer, "Thou hast answered well, and art not far from the kingdom of God." Jesus sanctioned what he had just said. "The truth is that there is but one God, and that there is none other but him." He also formally rejected and excluded any divinity for himself as the Christ, by proclaiming God to be One and Indivisible, as Moses had already proclaimed him; and he thus established this faith as the basis of Christianity as well as of Judaism.

Jesus never desired to arrogate divinity to himself. Observe that he never gives himself the title of God, whereas he often speaks of God as One. He declared that his Father was greater than he; and in the last solemn words which he addressed to God previous to his sacrifice, he said, "Thou, my Father, who art the only true God" (John xvii. 3).

The necessities of the age required that the question should remain where it was till the moment when human intelligence should be sufficiently developed to receive the mysteries of the mission of Jesus, and sufficiently humble not to demand that God himself should stoop to men to redeem them from their faults.

LUKE, CHAP. X.—VERSES 29–37.

Parable of the good Samaritan.

(29) But he, wishing to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbour? (30) And Jesus replied, saying, A certain man went down

Digitized by Google

from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell in with robbers, and they stripped him, and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. (31) And it happened by chance that a certain priest went down by that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. (32) And in like manner a Levite, who was near the place, came and looked at him, and passed by on the other side. (33) But a certain Samaritan who was travelling came up to him, and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, (34) And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring over them oil and wine. And having mounted him on his own beast, he brought him to an inn, and took care of him. (35) And when he was starting off on the morrow, he took out two denarii, and gave them to the host, and said to him, Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will pay you when I return. (36) Which of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers? (37) And he said, He who took pity on him. Then Jesus said to him, Go and do thou likewise.

§ 259. God looks on all his children with the same paternal eye, whatever their country, language, or religion. Men, you are all brethren, and should therefore practise charity of mind, heart, and action towards one another. Do not repulse any of your brethren, because their actions are less worthy than your own. Never condemn them; never; for you would then resemble the Pharisees, the Levites, and the chief men among the Jews.

Imitate the Good Samaritan, and aid all who are in want, without inquiring into the cause of their fall, or asking if they are able to walk straight after you have relieved them. Begin by succouring them; and if they repulse you then, depart; but be always ready to return immediately. You should not only cause the wounded to be taken care of, but should first take care of them yourselves, to the full extent of your means, strength, heart, and intelligence; and if your occupations permit, attend to them entirely yourselves. If your brother should fall again, even by his own fault, show him so much gentleness, patience, and good will, that he need not fear to lean upon you; for you will then sustain his tottering steps, give fresh vigour to his weak head, and restore warmth and life to his paralyzed heart. You should carefully study the parable of the Good Samaritan, for, however numerous the lessons which have been drawn from this example that Jesus has set before you, you will always find something to learn and meditate upon. Learn to practise its teachings.

Digitized by Google

In this parable, Jesus represents charity as practised by the Samaritan, whom the Jews regarded as a heretic and accursed; while those who were deficient in charity were the orthodox priest and Levite. He had a double object in saying to the lawyer, "Go, and do thou likewise." In the first place, he desired to show mankind that all are brethren, whoever they may be, and that pride leads to a fall by blinding them to the duties which they ought to practise; for there are neither heretics nor orthodox in the sight of God; and the only way of salvation is charity. Jesus thus condemned, both then and for ever afterwards, all differences and antipathies arising from outward opinions and forms of worship, and the dogmatism and intolerance which result from them. He proclaimed that faith without works is nothing, and that faith, in the eyes of God, does not consist in human dogmas, which are the result of the false and presumptuous interpretations of men, but consists exclusively in that charity which implies the *practice* of justice, love, pity, and fraternity. Jesus also desired to condemn from the first that maxim of the Roman Church, "Out of the Church, no salvation;" and by condemning this, to set forward as the only truth: "Without charity, no salvation." Yes, there is no salvation without that charity which is practised by the love of God above all things, and of the neighbour as one's self; the neighbour, whoever he is; whether acquaintance or stranger, friend or enemy. Has not Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute you, and slander you?"

LUKE, CHAP. X.—VERSES 38–42.

Jesus at the house of Martha.

(38) And it came to pass as they were travelling that he entered a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha entertained him in her house. (39) And she had a sister called Mary, and she sat at the feet of Jesus, and listened to his discourse, (40) But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and stood by, and said, Lord, does it not trouble you that my sister leaves me to serve alone? Therefore, tell her to help me. (41) And Jesus answered and said to her, Martha,

Digitized by Google

thou art anxious and troubled about many things. (42) But there is one thing needful, and Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

§ 260. These words have often been strained by false human interpretations according to the letter, to authorize a religious life apart from all material cares. This was not the Master's intention; Martha troubled herself more than necessary about the needs of the body, and forgot that what was necessary would be quite enough. She desired to make a display, notwithstanding her humble station; and it was for this that Jesus reproved her. Man ought to care for the preservation of his being. This is an absolute law which he must not depart from, but he ought not to neglect the claims of his spirit, and sacrifice them to what is unnecessary. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone." You should therefore learn how to combine the cares needful for your body and your spirit. Both can be attended to at once without injury, if you act wisely.

Mary's first thought was to profit by the teachings of Jesus. When you experience two pressing desires, do you not yield to the strongest? But you should not be exclusive, either in the one case or the other. "Mary," said Jesus, "has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her," because spiritual nourishment is never lost. It is a plant whose roots are always spreading. Mary, like all others, regarded Jesus as clothed with a material human body, like yours; but he appeared to her to have no special tastes or requirements, and contented himself with little. What need was there then for her to trouble about material cares? You know that Jesus only took food (and even then in appearance, and not in reality) when he had a lesson to give, or an example to set.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSES 41–46. MARK, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 35–37. LUKE, CHAP. XX. VERSES 41–44.

Christ and David.

Matth. xxii. (41) And the Pharisees being assembled, Jesus asked them, saying, (42) What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say to him, The son of David. (43) He says to them, Why then does David in spirit call him Lord, saying, (44) The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand, while I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. (45) If David therefore calls him Lord, how is he his son? (46) And no one was able to answer him the saying, nor dared any one from that day question him any more.

Mark xii. (35) And Jesus answered and said, teaching in the Temple, How say the Scribes that Christ is the Son of David? (36) For David himself said, in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand while I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. (37) Therefore David himself calls him Lord; and how is he his son? And the great multitude heard him gladly.

Luke xx. (41) And he said to them, How say they that Christ is the son of David? (42) But David himself says in the book of Psalms, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on my right hand. (43) While I make thy enemies the footstool of thy feet. (44) David therefore calls him Lord, and how is he his son?

§ 261. This observation was designed by Jesus to teach men that he was not united to David by fleshly ties, and was therefore not his descendant; and that he was superior to humanity. Secondly, he expressed the vast difference which existed between the spirit of David, and that of the Christ of God. Whatever was the humility, gentleness, and self-renunciation of Jesus, you must not forget his origin. He is your Lord, and ours, and is the Son of God, although not from the point of view in which you Christians have regarded him, as being God himself, but one of his creatures, the son of the Most High, and the brother of men, like every created spirit; though himself a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity.* The question which Jesus put to the Pharisees, and which no one was able to answer, was only intended to be fully answered by the New Revelation, which could alone reveal the true nature and origin of Christ. The allegorical expressions of the

* Compare §§ 35 and 36, vol. i. pp. 104–123.

Digitized by Google

Psalm apply, under a veil, to the mission of Jesus, who sits on the right hand of God, in regard to your planet, being intrusted with the purification and transformation of the planet and its humanity.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIII.—VERSES 1–7. MARK, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 38–40. LUKE, CHAP. XX. VERSES 45–47.

Scribes and Pharisees.

Matth. xxiii. (1) Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying, (2) The Scribes and Pharisees sit on the seat of Moses. (3) Therefore all things which they tell you to observe, observe and do; but do not perform their works, for they speak, and do not act. (4) For they bind heavy burdens, and difficult to be borne, and lay them on the shoulders of men, but they will not move them with their finger. (5) And they do all their works to be seen of men, and they widen their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments. (6) And they love the first seats at feasts, and in the synagogues, (7) And greetings in the market-places, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

Mark xii. (38) And he said to them in his teaching, Beware of the Scribes, who desire to walk about in robes. (39) And love greetings in the market-places, and the first seats in the synagogues, and at feasts. (40) They devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; these shall receive still severer condemnation.

Luke xx. (45) And while all the people were listening, he said to his disciples, (46) Beware of the Scribes, who like to walk about in robes, and love greetings in the market-places, and the first seats in the synagogues and at feasts. (47) Who devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; these shall receive still severer condemnation.

§ 262. In all ages men have lived who have preached and taught a morality to others which they have not practised themselves. The seed which they thus sow may fall upon good ground, and yield fruit; but it is frequently lost, because teaching is the best example. Can your disciple complain of the severity of morals which you impose upon him, if he sees that you conform to them yourself? Will he not comprehend indulgence for others, if you are indulgent towards him? Will he not be more ready to be charitable, if you show him that you yourself practise charity? Will he not love his brethren, if you show your love for him? Let not the man who preaches but does not practise be discouraged, but let him apply his own words to himself, and

Digitized by Google

he will teach what he preaches by example. He will then lead the multitude more easily, for nothing is so eloquent as example. Do not imitate the proud Scribes and Pharisees. Lighten your brothers' burdens by yourselves showing them how to bear them lightly.

If Christianity, and especially Catholicism, have not yielded the fruits which they ought, is it not because the leaders of the Church have preached and taught without performing, like the Scribes and Pharisees of whom Jesus spoke?

Yes, certainly, for it is easier to speak than to act.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIII.—VERSES 8–12.

God alone is the Father, and Christ alone is the Teacher.

(8) But be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your Teacher, Christ, and you are all brethren. (9) And be ye not called Father on earth, for one is your Father, the Father in the heavens. (10) Nor be ye called Teachers, for one is your Teacher, Christ. (11) He that is greatest among you, let him be your minister, (12) And whoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled, and whoever shall humble himself shall be exalted.

§ 263. The lesson given by Jesus to his disciples and to all men may be summed up in humility and fraternity. Jesus forbade, then and for ever afterwards, that such terms should be applied to any man as Father, which belongs to God only; and Teacher, which belongs only to Christ as the ruler and protector of your planet. Nothing but Pharisaical pride could lead men to claim these titles at any time.

Do not give way to pride, nor seek to raise yourselves above your brethren by making them feel your superiority. Never flatter those whom you believe to be superior to yourselves, for this would lead to pride and disastrous consequences to you, if you exalt yourselves, and to them, if you raise them above their proper station. Never abase or humble yourselves before your fellow-men; for praise and admiration are due to God alone. Give justice with sincerity to whomsoever it is due; but never yield to any feeling of servility, for your pride would revolt against it in the depths of your own heart, and you would awaken pride in your brother's heart. Never forget that he who

Digitized by Google

thinks too much of himself is contemptible; but all incarnate spirits are liable to fall into this error unawares, and it leads to contempt for others, as well as pride. This contempt is often disguised under the appearance of affability, condescension, and protection; but it is, nevertheless, contempt; and thus recoils on themselves. If you search your conscience, you will there find the leaven of pride which we would destroy. A just appreciation of one's own merits is so difficult that none of you can pretend to it; and you should no longer believe yourselves to be more devout, charitable, upright, learned, or clever, than others, or even than the bulk of the people; for if you surpass them in one respect, you may be inferior to them in many others. A just appreciation of himself will always teach the wise man that he has much to do to destroy evil, cultivate good, and seek for improvement. Never forget that whoever exalts himself is near a fall; and never tempt your neighbour by rousing in his breast the feeling of pride, which might destroy him. Be just, but never flatter anybody.

"Let him who would be greatest among you, be as your servant." If his pride gains the upper hand, he will be your servant when his experiences begin afresh, and he will be forced to humiliate himself; "for whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted." He who tries to raise himself above others, and to make his superiority felt, is always urged by pride; and in the day of retribution he will be obliged to expiate his fault, just as humility of the heart (not of the lips) must also receive its reward.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIII.—VERSES 13–22.

Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.

(13) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers, therefore you shall receive much greater condemnation. (14) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you shut up the kingdom of the heavens before men; you do not enter yourselves, and you hinder those who are about to enter. (15) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,

Digitized by Google

for you traverse sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him two-fold more the son of Gehenna than yourselves. (16) Woe to you, blind guides, who say, Whoever shall swear by the shrine, it is nothing, but whoever shall swear by the gold of the shrine, he is bound. (17) Fools and blind; for which is greater, the gold, or the shrine which hallows the gold? (18) And whoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing, but whoever shall swear by the gift upon it, he is bound. (19) Fools and blind; for which is greater, the gift, or the altar which sanctifies the gift? (20) Therefore, whoever swears by the altar swears by it, and by everything upon it. (21) And whoever swears by the shrine, swears by it, and by him who dwelleth therein. (22) And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God, and by him who sitteth thereon.

§ 264. Woe to those who depart from the way traced out by the Just One, and turn aside those who are striving to follow it, to drag them into the errors which they propagate! Woe to those who shelter themselves behind a faith which they do not feel, to abuse the credulity of men, and employ it to serve their own ends! Woe to those who, under the appearance of faith, draw into their ways those who would have held themselves aloof, and cause them to fall into their own errors! Woe, woe to the impostors and hypocrites who make a trade of their prayers, and sell the blessings of the Lord, and admission to the divine abode! Woe to them, for they shall see the deceit and wickedness of their ways; and remorse and expiation will bow their proud heads, and bend their stubborn knees! Blind leaders of the blind who entangle men in an inextricable net of guilty trifles! You know, leaders of Israel, who lead the Shepherd's sheep, that the lying and arbitrary laws which you yourselves frame, are heavy chains which clog the steps of those whom you ought to help forward; and you, blind ones, who have only to open your eyes to behold the light, why do you bow beneath a yoke which your reason rejects?

Swear not, O feeble race, neither by the altar, nor by the temple, nor by heaven; never dare to swear, for you are too weak to keep your vows; but let your words be brief and simple, Yea, yea, Nay, nay. Genuine sentiments need no strong expressions; and simplicity is the companion of truth. Never swear; and neither take an oath yourselves, nor require it from your brethren, for how do you know that

Digitized by Google

they will be able to keep it? Be simple in word and act, and let your bond towards men be the same as towards God; purity of the heart.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIII.—VERSES 23–39. LUKE, CHAP. XI.—VERSES 37–54. LUKE, CHAP. XIII. VERSES 31–35.

Hypocritical Teachers.

Matth. xxiii. (23) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these things ye ought to have done, and not neglected the others. (24) Blind guides, who strain out the gnat, and gulp down the camel! (25) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, and within they are filled with extortion and injustice. (16) Blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and the dish, that their outside may be clean also. (27) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye resemble whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but within they are filled with the bones of the dead, and with all impurity. (28) Thus also you appear righteous to men outwardly, but within, you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. (29) Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you build the tombs of the prophets, and adorn the monuments of the righteous; (30) And you say, If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have shared with them in the blood of the prophets. (31) So that you bear witness to yourselves that you are sons of those who killed the prophets. (32) And you have filled up the measure of your fathers. (33) Serpents, offspring of vipers, how can you fly from the judgment of Gehenna? (34) Therefore behold I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, and some of them you shall kill and crucify, and some of them you shall scourge in your synagogues, and drive them from city to city. (35) That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom you slew between the shrine and the altar. (36) Verily I say to you, All these things shall come upon this generation. (37) Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who killest the prophets, and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. and ye would not! (38) Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (39) For I say unto you, You shall not see me from this time, until you shall say, Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.

Luke xi. (37) And while he was speaking, a certain Pharisee asked him to breakfast at his house. (38) And he went in, and sat down. And when the Pharisee saw it, he wondered that he had not first washed before breakfast. (39) And the Lord said to him, Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and the table, but within you are full of extortion and wickedness. (40) Fools, does not he who made the outside, make the inside also? (41) But give alms of your possessions, and behold all things shall be clean unto you. (42) But woe to you, Pharisees, for you pay tithes of mint and rue and every kind

Digitized by Google

of herb, and pass by the judgment and the love of God; these things ought you to do, and not leave those undone. (43) Woe unto you, Pharisees, for you love the first seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the market-places, (44) Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are like unseen graves, and the men who walk over them do not see them. (45) And a certain lawyer answered and said to him, Teacher, in saying these things, you insult us also. (46) And he said, And woe to you, lawyers, for you load men with burdens grievous to be borne, and you yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. (47) Woe unto you, for you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers slew them. (48) Truly you bear witness to and approve of your father's deeds, for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. (49) Therefore, also, the wisdom of God said, I will send among them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall kill and banish, (50) That the blood of all the prophets, which has been shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation. (51) From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias, who perished between the shrine and the altar; verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation. (52) Woe unto you, lawyers, for you have taken away the key of the Gnosis; you enter not in yourselves, and those who were entering in, you hindered. (53) And while he was saying these things to them, the Scribes and Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, (54) Lying in wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might denounce him.

Luke xiii. (31) On that day certain Pharisees came to him, saying to him, Go forth and depart hence, for Herod desires to kill thee. (32) And he said to them, Go and tell that fox, Behold I cast out demons, and I work cures to-day and to-morrow, and on the third day I will bring them to an end. (33) Besides, I must journey to-day and to-morrow, and the next day, for it is impossible for a prophet to perish out of Jerusalem. (34) Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who killest the prophets, and stonest those who are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen her brood under her wings, and ye would not! (35) Behold your house is left unto you desert; and verily I say unto you, You shall not see me until you shall say, Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.

§ 265. (Matth. xxiii. 23; Luke xi. 42.)—Weigh well the import of these words of Jesus, you who sell prayers, and you who buy them; and who make gifts to churches and convents, thinking thus to redeem your faults, and to bribe the justice of God. Weigh well these words, for you are hypocrites, like the Scribes and Pharisees. You confine yourselves to outward actions; you bow before your altars with outward humility, while your hearts are filled with bitterness, pride, and envy. You trust in the number of prayers that you have murmured while your thoughts were elsewhere; and in the number of your genuflexions, and the amount of alms which you have cast into the treasury, with-

Digitized by Google

out reflecting that all these things are worthless as compared with the least change in the heart.

Do not bow so often in your temples, but stoop sometimes to raise the unhappy who have fallen; do not kneel so often on the floor of your temples, but lift your hearts to the Lord, with more faith, gratitude, and love. Do not throw the offering "of the useless plants of your garden" into the treasury of the Temple with so much ostentation; but deprive yourselves more often (in secret) of offerings for the widow, the orphan, and the poor.

But do not neglect the duties imposed upon you by your religion, for until you have become sufficiently purified to be the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, you require a curb. Let the fulfilment of your duties be homage, sincerely rendered to the Great Being who governs the universe; and not the monotonous and regular action of a machine. Therefore, do not confine yourselves to the outward observances of your religion, to the neglect of sincere worship, and charity of heart and action, which constitute in practice the love of God, through justice, mercy, and faith.

(Matth. xxiii. 24–28; Luke xi. 38–52.)—These words are still applicable to your own days. Woe to those who confine themselves to the outward observances of the Law, without practising the virtues which they preach to others. Woe to them, for they condemn themselves, and their own mouth accuses them before the Lord. Woe to those who make themselves a covering of false works, which are only apparently good, but have no other object but to impose on men, and thus hide the iniquities of their conscience, and attract those whom they deceive by these outward appearances. Woe to those who know where truth is to be found, and turn aside their brethren lest it should be known, and their iniquities discovered. Woe to those who know where the light is, and keep it in the shade, lest their brethren should behold the deformities of their soul! Woe to those who are possessed of the key of knowledge, and who do not enter themselves, but close the door against

Digitized by Google

those who would enter; for those who know the truth ought to live according to its teachings. They have the key, but do not enter upon the path that opens before them, and they turn aside those whom they ought to lead, and are thus doubly guilty. Woe to those who know the truth, but who veil or disguise it, that they may lead men more easily into the dark paths in which they themselves walk! They are apparently scrupulous for their consciences, and those of their disciples, but their inward unworthiness compels them to act thus. They are incapable of following the path, and turn aside those who would walk in it, saying, "Follow us, for we alone know the safest path, and whoever does not follow us is lost." O woe to them, for they are blind leaders of the blind, and will have to give an account of all the sheep whom they have lost, and of all those whom they have hindered from saving themselves! Woe to those who hide the light, for its lustre will blind them! Woe to the hypocrites, deceivers, and liars who teach as truths what they know to be false, opening the paths of error, but not following them themselves, because they do not believe in their hearts the principles which they impose on others; for they condemn themselves before the Lord. They load the shoulders of their brethren with a heavy burden, and will not support the least portion. They may lie to men, but they cannot lie to the Lord, who will require a severe account of their actions, from the beginning of the ages, and the beginning of their iniquities.

(Matth. xxiii. 29–39; Luke xi. 47–51; xiii. 31–35.)—Jesus here alludes to the persecution and death of the prophets; to his own approaching crucifixion, and to the martyrdom and persecutions of the Apostles, disciples, and early Christians. He also alludes to his efforts to gather the sheep into the fold of the Good Shepherd; to the destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jews, and finally to the period described allegorically as the end of the world; that is, the period when the regeneration will be effected by the purification and transformation of your planet and its humanity, and when your Ruler and Master will come in his glory; and the regenerate race of men

Digitized by Google

(both Jews and Gentiles) will cry with one voice, "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord!"

(Matth. xxiii. 35, 36; Luke, xi. 50, 51).—These words contain a hidden reference to reincarnation. God is too just to punish the descendants for the faults of their ancestors, which they have not shared; but those who had slain the prophets were still in the presence of Jesus, and eager to shed his blood. Consequently, they would have to give an account of all the blood which they had shed already, and of all the blood which they were still to shed. These were mysteries of reincarnation, the only key which could penetrate to the sense of the words of Jesus, and reconcile the justice of the Lord with his mercy. You will always find the teachings of Jesus pervaded by this thought, ready to be revealed when the time should come.

The blood shed by the Hebrews was always flowing, for it thus returned by reincarnation upon the heads of their descendants according to the flesh, who had shed it during their previous existences, until they had been purified in the fire. This expression is an emblem, for fire purifies everything. Fire was regarded as the principle of purification, and the agent destined to raise to the Eternal the perfumes of incense, and the odour of sacrifices. It is on this account that fire is continually spoken of as purifying sinners; the moral fire of remorse and expiation, which leads the guilty spirit to repentance, and the desire of reparation; and then to purification by reparation and progress.

MARK, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 41–44. LUKE, CHAP. XXI.—VERSES 1–4.

The Widow's Mite.

Mark xii. (41) And as Jesus was sitting opposite the treasury, he saw all the multitude casting money into the treasury. (42) And many rich men cast in much, and one poor widow came, and cast in two farthings, which make a halfpenny. (43) And having called his disciples, he saith unto them, Verily I say unto you that this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury. (44) For they all cast in from their abundance, but she from her poverty cast in as much as she had, even all her living.

Digitized by Google

Luke xxi. (1) And looking up, he saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. (2) And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in two mites. (3) And he said, In truth I say to you that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all. (4) For all these cast into the offerings of God from their abundance, but she from her poverty hath cast in all the living which she had.

§ 266. These verses require no comment. The lesson which Jesus thus gave men is easily understood. All charity is meritorious, when it is disinterested, and unaccompanied by pride or ostentation; but he who deprives himself of what is necessary for himself, to give to him who wants it, gives more than the rich man who gives of his abundance without depriving himself of anything, and is further advanced than the other in heartfelt charity. Thus the farthings of the poor widow are worth more in the eyes of God than the gold of the rich.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 1–14. MARK, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 1–13. LUKE, CHAP. XXI. VERSES 5-19.

End of the Age.

Matth. xxiv. (1) And Jesus coming out, departed from the Temple, and his disciples came to show him the buildings of the Temple. (2) And Jesus said to them, Do you not see all these things? Verily I say unto you that there shall not be left here stone upon stone which shall not be thrown down. (3) And while he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the age? (4) And Jesus answered and said to them, Beware lest anyone shall deceive you. (5) For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall deceive many. (6) And you will be likely to hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that ye be not frightened, for all these things must be; but the end is not yet. (7) For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and plagues and earthquakes in divers places. (8) And all these things are the beginning of travails.* (9) Then shall they give you over to affliction, and kill you, and you shall be hated among all nations through my name. (10) And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and hate one another. (11) And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. (12) And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold. (13) But whosoever shall endure unto the end, this man shall be

* I choose the primary meaning here, as it is peculiarly appropriate to the interpretation given below.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

saved. (14) And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole civilized world, for a testimony to all nations; and then shall the end come.

Mark xiii. (1) And as he was leaving the Temple, one of his disciples says to him, Teacher, see what great stones and what great buildings! (2) And Jesus answered and said to him, Dost thou look at these great buildings? there shall not remain stone upon stone which shall not be thrown down. (3) And while he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, opposite the Temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, (4) Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall the sign be when all these things are about to be accomplished? (5) And Jesus answered them, and began to say, Beware lest any man shall deceive you. (6) For many shall come in my name, saying, I am he; and they shall deceive many. (7) And when you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be not frightened, for thus it must be; but the end is not yet. (8) For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and tumults; these things are the beginnings of travails. (9) But look to yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and to synagogues; you shall be beaten, and shall be brought before rulers and kings for a testimony to them. (10) And the Gospel must first be preached among all nations. (11) And when they shall lead you to deliver you up, do not reflect beforehand what you shall say, nor take thought about it, but whatever shall be given to you in that hour, this you shall speak; for it is not ye who speak, but the Holy Spirit. (12) And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child, and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall put them to death. (13) And you shall be hated by all through my name: but he who shall abide to the end, this man shall be saved.

Luke xxi. (5) And as some were speaking of the Temple, how it was adorned with fine stones and offerings, he said, (6) As for these things which you behold, the days shall come in which there shall not be left stone upon stone which shall not be thrown down. (7) And they asked him, saying, Teacher, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign when these things are about to come to pass? (8) And he said, Beware that you are not deceived, for many shall come in my name, saying, I am he, and the time is at hand; do not follow after them. (9) And when you shall hear of wars and tumults, be not alarmed, for these things must first be, but the end is not immediately. (10) Then he said to them, Nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, (11) And there shall be great earthquakes in divers places, and famines and pestilences, and there shall be great and fearful signs from heaven. (12) But before all these things, they shall lay their hands upon you and persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and rulers on account of my name. (13) And it shall end in a testimony to you. (14) Therefore fix it in your hearts not to premeditate what you shall answer. (15) For I will give you speech and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to answer or confute. (16) And you shall be betrayed by parents and brethren and relatives, and friends, and some of you shall be put to death. (17) And you shall be hated by all men through my name. (18) But not a hair of your heads shall be destroyed. (19) In steadfastness you shall possess your lives.

Digitized by Google

§ 267. (Matth. xxiv. 1–3; Mark xiii. 1–4; Luke xxi. 5–7.) —The answer of Jesus was designed to keep nations always on their guard by portraying the events which must take place in the ordinary course of ages. His words were not addressed specially to the disciples, but rather to succeeding generations; and while they represented these events as leading to the end of the planet, they alluded spiritually to the destinies of your earth and its humanity, and to the appearance of Jesus on your purified earth. Everything was appropriate to the time, and to the needs of the age. This is also the case in the present epoch. The truth is contained in what you are told, but in certain cases it is not fully developed. All is not revealed to you, because you are not yet ripe to receive it. Revelations are always in accordance with the needs of the immediate present, and are preparatory to the future. Man rejects this idea, because his pride leads him to imagine that he is prepared to understand everything, and strong enough to bear everything. He does not like to admit that he has only just emerged from infancy, and that it is only little by little that the veil can be gradually raised to show him the truth.

(Matth. xxiv. 4–5; Mark xiii. 5–6; Luke xxi. 8.)—These words are allegorical, and related both to the present and the future. They apply to your own days, and to those which will follow. They allude to those who undertake to lead nations in the paths of the Lord, but who direct them into wrong courses. Let men take courage. He who was sent to them, and who manifested himself under a corporeal human appearance, has not left them, and no one can say, "I am he who accomplished the great sacrifice for you."

There will be, and already have been, Christs. The word is here used allegorically, and applies to spirits sent to your planet on a relatively superior mission. Such were all who have conduced to the progress of humanity, from the most distant ages. They have raised themselves above the masses whom they have ruled, by their virtues, knowledge, and genius; and however ungrateful men have been towards

Digitized by Google

them, they were nevertheless missionary spirits always relatively superior to those among whom their incarnation took place. There will be more Christs, and when they come, they will be gifted with large powers and great authority; but they will not proclaim themselves to be the Messiah, the Christ of God, your Protector, Ruler, and Master. You may know them by their following the example of the Master, in practising humility, self-renunciation, devotion, charity, and love; and when they attain to eminence, they will preach universal brotherhood and friendship by their example, and will open the paths of physical, moral, and intellectual progress to your humanity.

In speaking of false Christs, Jesus alluded to all those who should profess to hold full powers from the Lord, but yet should turn aside the servants of God from the right path. Despise those hypocritical Christs and false prophets who make lying laws, and turn men aside from spiritual religion to plunge them into the abuses of matter, and who desire to uphold the dominion of the letter which killeth, and reject the advent of the Spirit which giveth life. From all such turn aside, for they lead men in the way of perdition; a road which has no exit, and which compels you constantly to start afresh until you have found the safe and sure path which leads into the courts of the eternal temple, which cannot be destroyed.

(Matth. xxiv. 6–8; Mark xiii. 7, 8; Luke xxi. 9–11.)—Have not the wars, plagues, and famines of which Jesus spoke come to pass, and do they not still continue? The fearful sights refer to the abominations of which men were guilty both at that period, and afterwards. Does not history furnish you with many examples?* The great signs in heaven do not refer to anything material. This is a false interpretation, which has led the revolutions of planets to be regarded as signs of the end of the world. The signs which will be seen in heaven are the influences under which you are living at present; and which serve to develop the reason

* These words were medianimically dictated in August, 1863.

Digitized by Google

and the free will, and to enable the spirit better to discern the future.

Such is the general explanation, but do not imagine that there are no material signs in heaven, either physical, or resulting from medianimic causes. Jesus foretold the fall of Jerusalem, and history tells you that a comet, having the appearance of a sword, hung over Jerusalem for a whole year; and before sunrise, chariots full of armed men were seen in the air, or in the clouds, throughout the whole country.* You know that comets always present a somewhat similar appearance, and seem to end in a point. The shape of this comet led to its being supposed to have the figure of a sword. Comets are common; and there are always some which are more or less visible to you. The appearance of chariots of armed men in the clouds was a spirit-manifestation, witnessed by those who had medianimic faculties. These manifestations were designed to impress the incarnate spirits, and arrest their attention. Medianimic phenomena still take place among you.

Have not these things happened, and do they not still happen? Are they not necessary on account of the physical inferiority of your world, and the physical, moral, and intellectual inferiority of your humanity? Are they not still necesary, that the end may come according to the immutable laws of progress, by the accomplishment of the development, purification, and transformation, both from a planetary and human point of view, of everything which exists upon your globe? For everything proceeds from the infinitely little to the infinitely great.

(Matth. xxiv. 9–13; Mark xiii. 9–13; Luke xxi. 12–17.) —All these words are allegorical, so far as they do not apply personally and exclusively to the Apostles. Did not Jesus tell them that they should witness his advent, and the end of the age, and that that generation should not pass away till all these things should be fulfilled? You can see the ruling idea of reincarnation running through these words of Jesus.

* Josephus, Jewish War, vi. 3.

Digitized by Google

His words shall not pass away, and the generation of spirits to whom they were addressed will witness their accomplishment. When Jesus approached the end of his earthly mission, he repeated the directions and announcements which he had given to the Apostles at the beginning; and you may refer to previous explanations (§ 139, vol. i. pp. 327–331).

Jesus alluded to the persecutions which those would have to endure who departed from the false paths which had been prescribed for them. Have you not witnessed the persecution of all who perceived that truth was different to what it was represented, and who endeavoured to discover it? Material persecutions, though extinct among you, still survive in many countries;* and are ready to revive even among the most civilized nations. The opportunity alone is wanting, but the slightest pretext will awaken the slumbering passions. We do not predict religious wars, like those of former times; but private revenge and secret persecutions, by those who feel their authority shaken, and attack all whom they suspect of wishing to oppose them.

(Matth. xxiv. 11, 12.)—Jesus alludes to those teachers of the Law who would pervert his teachings, and falsify his words to give them an interpretation contrary to the law of God, but more in accordance with their own desires, personal interests, and ambition. The majority have turned aside from the right path, to follow these false prophets, and the few who desired to remain in the paths of love and charity have been and still are rejected by them and their disciples who are entangled in the bonds which they impose upon them.

(Luke xxi. 18.)—"Not a hair of your head shall perish," because whatever be the fate of matter, the spirit will emerge victorious.

(Luke xxi. 19.)—You will become masters of yourselves by your patience, and you will commit no act, and speak no word, which will be injurious to the advancement of your spirit.

* Medianimically dictated in August, 1863.

Digitized by Google

(Matth. xxiv. 14; Mark xiii. 10.)—The truths which Jesus taught must spread. Faith in God, love and charity must bind the whole world together.

You are far indeed from the time foretold by Jesus; nevertheless, Spiritism has come to hasten it, by leading all men whomsoever, and whatever their religion, to receive the good news, to hear it with joy, and to preach the Gospel of peace and love.

"Then shall the end come;" for all men will sincerely practise the law of love, and eagerly work together for the progress of each and all. The spirit will free itself more readily from matter, and matter itself will change its nature, according to the ascending course of the spirit.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 15–22. MARK, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 14-20. LUKE, CHAP. XXI. VERSES 20-24.

Transformation of the Earth.

Matth. xxiv. (15) Therefore when you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing in the Holy Place (let him who discerneth, know). (16) Then let those in Judæa flee to the mountains. (17) Let not him who is on his housetop go down to fetch anything out of his house. (18) And let not him who is in the field turn back to fetch his clothes. (19) But woe to those who are with child, and to those who give suck in those days! (20) But pray that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath. (21) For then shall be great affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the world till now, no, nor shall be. (22) And if those days were not shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but on account of the elect, those days shall be shortened.

Mark xiii. (14) And when you shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let him who discerneth, know), then let those in Judæa flee to the mountains. (15) And let not him who is on his housetop go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. (16) And let not him who is in the field turn back to fetch his garment. (17) But woe to those who are with child, and to those who give suck in those days! (18) But pray that your flight be not in the winter. (19) For in those days shall be distress so great that there was none such from the beginning of the Creation, which God created until now, neither shall be. (20) And unless God should have shortened the days, no flesh would be saved, but on account of the elect whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

Luke xxi. (20) And when ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed with armies, then shall you know that her desolation is at hand. (21) Then let those in Judæa flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of her depart out of her, and let those in the country districts not enter into her. (22) For these are the days of vengeance, when all

Digitized by Google

things that have been written shall be fulfilled. (23) But woe to those who are with child, and to those who give suck in those days! For there shall be great suffering in the land, and wrath upon this people. (24) And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive among all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled.

§ 268. The words of Jesus recorded by Matthew and Mark have been understood literally, and not according to the spiritual sense, which relates both to the vices which mankind must abandon, and to the physical convulsions through which your earth must pass, in correspondence with the moral and physical purification of your humanity. It is true that the time is approaching, for the abomination of desolation (whoso perceiveth, let him understand) is standing where it ought not, and is widely diffused among men. Vices hide in the shade of the temple; luxury, avarice, envy, pride, and ostentation, have taken possession of hearts that ought to be ruled only by the love of God and the neighbour.

Woe to those who are with child, and to those who give suck, for young children are entrusted to these faithless guides who profane their young minds, and rear them in iniquity! Woe to you, for the winter is at hand, when your sufferings will be increased. Pray to the Lord that it may be deferred until you can clothe yourselves. Do not stop on the road, nor wander from it, nor make any provisions regarding matter; fulfil your work where the Lord has placed you, and do not look back, but hasten to finish your task, that it may be completed when the appointed time has come.

You were formerly buried in darkness, and few among you could have escaped if the Lord had not sent you light. Strive to be among the just who shall be saved; that is, those who will not be cast down to the inferior worlds, but will be admitted to follow the ascending course of the spirit on your regenerated planet.

Prepare beforehand the robe of charity and love which will preserve you from the severity of the cold, and then you need not fear being surprised by the winter. Hasten to complete your work, whatever it may be, where you have begun it, that it may be finished when the voice of the Lord

Digitized by Google

shall call on you to give an account. Take courage, for the days of trouble have been shortened; the Lord has sent you light to enlighten your path, and balm to heal your wounds.

(Matth. xxiv. 16–18; Mark xiii. 14–16.)—These words relate to the successive physical convulsions which your planet must experience before entering on a new phase. They refer to the earthquakes which will take place in some parts of your globe. Those who will be surprised by this calamity will have neither time nor possibility of escape; and it would be useless for them to attempt it.

(Matth. xxiv. 19–21; Mark xiii. 17–20.)—Pray that these events may not overtake you without your being spiritually on your guard, and prepared to meet the calamities which must inevitably accompany the renewal of a planet. Cold will follow heat, and winter will spread over nature. The fire will consume what has not been destroyed by the ice. The transformation of your planet in passing from a material condition to the fluidic state will no more be accomplished instantaneously than your own individual and personal transformation. For this end, the nature of the elements of which you are composed must be partially changed, and in order not to disturb the equilibrium, the whole mass must be displaced, and gradually changed in direction, especially the atmosphere, that it may find a suitable medium for its equilibrium. Your sphere will remove from its centre of gravity in consequence of its displacement, and pass gradually on to the station which it must occupy after your transformation.*

The planetary renovation, and that of the kingdoms of nature, and of your humanity will take place gradually in a progressive and continuous manner. Will you not perceive it in the annual revolutions of your globe, and the planetary crises which will prepare for its progress and

* Thus, according to the veiled Revelation given to John (Rev. v. 11). "The heavens and the earth fled away," progressively "and there was no place found for them," when the ascent of the planet into the superior regions, and then into the regions of pure fluids shall be completely finished. What will take place in consequence of the displacement and ascension of the planet, is indicated, also under a veil, by the words of Jesus recorded in the Gospels.

Digitized by Google

transformation, and by the distance which you traverse, which will remove you from the centre from whence you derive warmth and life? While your globe is removing from its present centre, the cold will make itself felt at all the points which are least exposed to the sun. The snows will extend, and the inward fermentation of the earth will lead to explosions which will expel the primordial substances, and scatter them in space. This will give the earth the density suited to the new position which it is to occupy. It would be necessary to invent new terms for these primordial substances, to express the events to come; but you might call them lava, bitumen, asphalt, or volcanic substances, in order to understand what must take place at a fixed period.

Men will then be more purified and elevated, and will, for the most part, not experience the same requirements, for these will vary like the atmosphere; and men will then fly to the points of the earth which still remain habitable, and those less advanced will vainly seek for an asylum, which they can only find in moral progress. But will there not always be different degrees of advancement? Can the necessities of the most advanced be the same as those of the inferior? Imperfect as you still are, are there not nations even now which are gradually dying out? This is because human civilization is extending like a net, and is ready to enclose them; again, moral progress will pass from nation to nation, always pressing on the more refractory, until they have joined in the general current. You can clearly understand that even when you have attained the degree of planetary advancement which is promised to you, there will always be different degrees of intelligence, and of perfection. Those only who obstinately refuse to improve will be excluded until they have made full atonement by the expiation, reparation, and progress which is necessary before they can be re-admitted.

But do not forget that these events will not be the work of one day, but of ages, and that the human races which have changed since the formation of your world must change again, for all is harmony in nature. Compare the men

Digitized by Google

among you with those of some parts of the earth which seem to you to be disinherited. Compare those unhappy races who are more like apes than men, with the account which has been given you of the fallen incarnate spirit, when he is cast upon a world of trials for the first time;* and follow all the phases through which he must have passed, and you will then be able to form some idea of those through which he has yet to pass.

The words of Jesus, "Woe to those who are with child and to those who give suck in those days," had no other object, as regards the physical convulsions, which are the inevitable accompaniments of a planetary renewal, than to express the greatness of those calamities which should spare neither the suckling nor the unborn child, and should overtake mothers in their dearest hopes.

"Pray that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath." The Sabbath is a day of rest, and the winter is a time of severity. These words were designed to lead men to pray to the Lord that they might not be surprised in idleness and improvidence, but might be always ready when the day of reckoning should come; and thus escape suffering and expiation. The distress of these days is said to be greater than it ever was before, or will be afterwards. You can understand this in reference to the catastrophes necessarily attending the purification and transformation of the world. The transformations which your globe has already suffered were only designed to improve the matter of which it was composed, but those which must take place in future ages will gradually transform this matter itself into fluidic substances appropriate to your new bodies. The distress of that time will be greater than at any previous age, both as regards the nature and character of the physical convulsions, and as regards their consequences to the spirits who have remained obstinately rebellious to progress, or backward, and who will be removed from your earth at the time of its purification and transformation, and cast down to the

* Compare vol. i. pp. 127 and 128.

Digitized by Google

inferior planets. But remember that the Lord will never deprive any of his children, however insignificant or guilty, of the power and opportunity of doing better; and although the exiles will then cease to reincarnate themselves on your world, their successive reincarnations will nevertheless run their course, but amid other surroundings, until the guilty have amended, and have deserved to return to their own country by the relative moral and intellectual progress which they have acquired.

(Matth. xxiv. 22; Mark xiii. 21.)—These words, understood spiritually and not literally, are designed to show how the Lord protects those who walk in his ways, and the assistance which these can give to their brethren. It is said that the Lord would shorten those days because of the elect, and that otherwise no flesh could be saved. This is figurative. Jesus gave an example and comparison, and it was an encouragement, and a reason for modification, in the sense that the elect (that is, those who walk in the ways of the Lord) work with indefatigable zeal at the progress of their inferiors, and thus aid in the advancement of all. Everything is linked together; the planetary transformation is one consequence of the moral transformation of the spirits, according to the immutable and eternal laws of physical, moral, and intellectual progress. There is a general solidarity; and there is nothing uncertain or arbitrary with God. The future is non-existent to him, being unrolled before his eyes as much and more than is the present moment before yours.

Men improve, and labour at each other's improvement, and thus aid in the fulfilment of the promises which God has made through his Messiahs, who are his special messengers; while if (which is impossible) men had all remained in evil without desiring to emerge from it, the period of the transformation would come, and all men would have been cast down on the inferior worlds, and would have been replaced by other spirits in harmony with the degree of progress which the planet had accomplished, and had still to accomplish; and thus "no flesh would have been saved."

Digitized by Google

The words of Jesus are always poetical and figurative, and you now understand the object of these hypothetical expressions, which were appropriate to the intelligence of the time, and were afterwards designed to fructify under the reign of the letter, and prepare for that of the Spirit.

You must understand us clearly. We have not said that these inevitable catastrophes will take place simultaneously. Ages are nothing to Him from whose thought they proceed. You are moving towards the end, but you are not told that it will happen to-morrow, or be accomplished in a day.

Do not rest your thoughts on these catastrophes, but prepare to come forth conquerors; that is, purified, having left the old man in the ruins of the old world; and being born anew on your renewed planet. Do not think more than needful on the material events which are about to happen, but try to prepare for the future of your humanity by working to perfect it as it is at present; and leave it to the Lord to send among you those who will come on purpose to rend the veil which still darkens your intelligence. A line is traced out for you which you cannot pass; remain within its limits; and you will find it to include sufficient development to exercise your faculties and good-will.

(Luke xxi. 20–24.)—In the discourses of Jesus, events which were present or near are linked with those which he foresaw in a distant future; and the form of his discourses intentionally prevented his hearers from distinguishing between the present and the future. Thus, in replying to the question of his disciples (Matth. xxiv. 1–3; Mark xiii. 1–4; Luke xxi. 5–7), the thought of Jesus included both the Hebrew Jerusalem and, figuratively, the world.

His prophetic answers relating to Jerusalem and the Jews, and recorded by Matthew and Mark under medianimic influence, represent figuratively the world, which will relatively undergo siege and calamities; and literally the destruction of the beloved city of the Jews. In the narrative of Luke, also written under medianimic influence, these answers include both the figurative sense relating to the future, and in a strict and proper sense, the Hebrew Jerusalem.

Digitized by Google

The words of Jesus were always appropriate to his immediate surroundings, but included a prophetic sense, hidden from most men, and designed to be understood progressively in spirit and in truth at the time of the new era of the Christianity of Christ. While the Jews regarded these words as representing the calamities which befel their Holy City, the Christians and believers should always see the phases through which humanity must pass. Like the Hebrew Jerusalem the world and its humanity must suffer many vicissitudes, and assaults. Terror will fall upon you, for the enemies whom you have to fear will assemble in great numbers to attack you. These enemies are your vices; but do not allow yourselves to be conquered; defend yourselves valiantly, for the actual Jerusalem will be destroyed, but you will rebuild an eternal city where the happy inhabitants will have nothing more to fear. Time, reincarnation and progress, in the course of planetary and human events, will accomplish this work of renovation in the physical order of your world, and in the moral and physical order of your humanity.

(Luke xxi. 24.)—These figurative words relate to the intermediate period between the time when Jesus spoke, and the advent of the Spirit, when his word would be revived in power in all its purity. The accomplishment of the times of the Gentiles in the universal reign of the law of love and charity which should extend like a cloak to shelter all the children of the earth, and lead them to raternal unity by reciprocity and friendship.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 23–28. MARK, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 21–23.

False Christs—False Prophets.

Matth. xxiv. (23) Then if any one shall say to you, Lo here is Christ; or here; believe it not. (24) For there shall appear false Christs and false prophets, and shall give great and ominous signs, so that if it were possible, they should deceive even the chosen. (25) Behold, I have told you before. (26) Therefore if they shall say to you, Behold he is in the desert, do not go forth; behold he is in the secret chambers, believe it not. (27) For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and shineth even to the west, so also shall be the coming of the Son of Man. (28) For wherever the carcase is, there shall the eagles be gathered together.

Digitized by Google

Mark xiii. (21) And then if anyone shall say to you, Lo here is the Christ, or Lo there, believe it not. (22) For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall give signs and portents, to lead astray, if it were possible, even the chosen. (23) And look to yourselves; therefore I have told you all things beforehand.

§ 269. These words are designed to put men on their guard against those who shall endeavour to lead them astray, in the name of Christ, from the law of love and charity which he preached. Such warnings were often given by Jesus, who foresaw the dissensions which human ambition would bring into his Church which was based on love. and which should lead men into selfishness, pride, and all those material impulses which cause them to deny even the existence of God. You should now refer to the explanations already given on similar passages. The period of which Jesus spoke is not confined to the narrow limits which men have supposed from interpreting his words literally. In the course of events, men will have to contend with the evil influences around them, just as at present; but these influences are already among you, and will continue to act upon you. All those who would bind your consciences by imposing on you a worship different from that which God has established—universal love—are false Christs and false prophets; and when they say to you, Christ is here, or there, do not listen to them. They will still try for a long time to turn you from the straight path, but do not listen to them, nor follow them. Until the day when Jesus shall appear in his glory (that is, when all men shall have been led to practise his law) you will hear it said, Christ is here; or Christ is there; and you should avoid allowing yourselves to be imposed upon by lying words.

When seeking for the true sense of the Master's words, you must not forget that he was speaking to Orientals, and that his language was always clothed in imagery suited to modify the meaning according to the intelligence of those to whom he spoke, who were first designed to understand them literally, and afterwards, under the influence of time and progress, spiritually. You yourselves do not yet understand his unveiled word, because you are not yet strong enough.

Digitized by Google

The truth is contained in what you are told, but in some cases it is not developed to its full extent. The full sense of certain passages is not given you, because it would make events definite which must still remain in doubt and uncertainty, until you have cultivated your faith, and made yourselves strong enough to see and understand everything. Do not forget that you are preparing the way; and that the Master himself will come to enlighten your intelligence, and to free the spirit entirely from the letter.

(Matth. xxiv. 23, 24; Mark xiii. 21, 22.) These words also refer to the period between the earthly mission of Jesus, and the time when the law of love which he preached by teaching and example, shall be understood and practised in all its purity. They relate to the efforts made to turn men aside from pure and simple obedience to the laws of God and of his messenger, and to compel them to submit to a religious code of human origin, which disfigures the simplest and highest morality which man can hope to attain. These words relate to the efforts of false shepherds, and to the inducements which they hold out to their flocks, to lead them in the wrong course. Jesus alludes to everything that has or will be attempted to turn men from the light, and to lead them into darkness, whatever may be the means employed. All those who divert you from the practice of love and charity, and pervert the admirable code which Christ has left you, are false Christs and false prophets, and are not to be heeded.

Occult influences are always combined with human influence, but Jesus makes no special allusion here to the former. Spiritual revelation and science have initiated you into the secrets of the other world, and taught you that those spiritual and medianimic phenomena which were ignorantly regarded as privileges or miracles in the sense of being a departure from the laws of nature, are only an application of them; and that they may be produced by evil as well as good occult influences, by means of special organic faculties which the most unworthy of men may possess, as well as the most worthy.

Digitized by Google

Spiritual Revelation and science have thus taught you that the mere fact of spiritual or medianimic phenomena is by no means the criterion which could or should determine the morality and veracity of men. We have already explained the signs by which alone you can and ought to recognize the true Christs and true prophets.

What might be great prodigies to the men to whom Jesus spoke, and to the succeeding generations until your own days, when the spirit light is shining in the sight of all, cannot, and ought not, to lead you astray; for you have been forewarned, and are now enlightened. You should regard all those as false Christs and false prophets, and as conscious or unconscious instruments of error and darkness, no matter what great prodigies, and marvellous things, they may perform, if they try to divert you from the practice of love and charity, the teachings and examples of the Master, and the pure and simple law which he has given you. Do not believe them, nor follow them.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 29–31. MARK, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 24–27. LUKE, CHAP. XXI. VERSES 25–28.

Signs of the Coming of Christ.

Matth. xxiv. (29) And immediately after the affliction of these days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. (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 shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (31) And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and shall gather together his chosen from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Mark xiii. (24) But in those days, after this distress, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall be cast down, (25) And the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken. (26) And then shall be seen the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. (27) And then shall he send forth his angels, and shall gather together his chosen from the four winds, from the utmost limit of the earth to the utmost limit of heaven.

Luke xxi. (25) And there shall be signs in the sun, and moon, and stars, and on earth anguish of nations in distress at the roaring of the sea and the waves. (26) Men fainting from fear, and foreboding of the things coming on the civilized world, for the powers of the heavens shall

Digitized by Google

be shaken. (27) And then shall be seen the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with great power and glory. (28) And when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, for your redemption is at hand.

§ 270. (Matth. xxiv. 29; Mark xiii. 24, 25; Luke xxi. 25, 26.)—These words contain a fresh announcement, under a veil, of the events which must take place in the physical and moral order, until the time when the kingdom of God shall be established in all hearts. In the physical order they relate to the successive partial revolutions which will effect the transformation of your planet. There is nothing abrupt in nature; and just as the ages which have passed have brought you up to your present level, thus ages must still pass before you have attained the point which has been promised to you. Your globe, like all others, has risen from incandescent fluids, which are impure, in the sense that they are loaded with substances designed to compose matter; and it must return to the pure fluids, freed from all material principles. For this purpose, the decomposition of matter must proceed by the same steps as its composition; but before this you will have already undergone a prodigious modification. In order to attain to purity, you must gradually pass through every stage of moral and physical progress, and your planet must pass through all stages of physical progress. This progress will be partially effected by preparatory crises, which will renew the races of men by incarnating more advanced spirits, and will renovate the material conditions of the earth, by destroying its former principles, and gradually constructing new ones from them. Just as the inhabitants of the earth are now as far developed as the earth is prepared to minister to their requirements, and has undergone the needful transformations, so will your existing world become fitted for the necessities of the purified spirits who will be replaced upon it, after they have undergone the needful progressive modifications. Then the conditions of your globe will be different, for your humanity and your human envelope will also differ in various particulars; and these changing conditions will be due to the difference of

Digitized by Google

moral and intellectual advancement, according to the portions of the globe which are modified. This is the case in all planets. Whatever the degree of spiritual advancement, there are always some more advanced than others, who aid the progress of those who are inferior to them; and the conditions of life correspond to their advancement. You can form a definite idea of this, for although the physical conditions of your world are still material for all, the savages of Oceanica, or the Esquimaux, are widely different from the civilized inhabitants of Europe. The latter, by continuing their regular course in the path of progress, will enter first upon the new phases of life. In the progressive course of planetary events, the spiritual essences which are not yet sufficiently advanced, and which are only fitted for material development, will be removed from your globe. They will be replaced in appropriate conditions, but the crises necessary to bring your planet to its fluidic stage will destroy most of the material stations where the primitive spirit is developed. All the creatures of the Lord will be gradually reclassed afresh in a course which runs parallel to the progress of man, as regards the various kingdoms, and their habitation. The veiled allusion to the darkening of the sun and moon relates to the receding of the earth to a greater distance from these two orbs which give you light. The earth will depart from its present position when it becomes purified and resplendent with light.

In the moral order, the stars which fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens which are shaken, have begun to descend towards you, in order (to use the figurative expression of Jesus) to cause the sign of the Son of Man to appear in heaven. This sign is the law of love and charity of which Jesus is the personification, and which is manifested by the revelation which Jesus himself brought to men, as explained and developed by the Spirit of Truth. The stars or the powers of the heavens, the lights of the Lord, are the guardian spirits of humanity who bring the light of heaven before your eyes. These stars will fall, and these powers will be shaken more and more; for the more you raise yourselves, the more will

Digitized by Google

high spirits approach you, and unfold to your eyes the unknown splendours which would dazzle you at present.

(Matth. xxiv. 30; Mark xiii. 26; Luke xxi. 27.)—The sign of the Son of Man which Jesus foretold should appear in heaven, is the advent of the kingdom of love and charity. The darnel will then have been completely separated from the good corn; and men will be regenerated and prepared to receive the kingdom of God in their hearts. Then there will be only one fold and one Shepherd, at whose feet the flock will fall, weeping with gratitude and joy for the great mercies which have been lavished upon them; and with sorrow for having misunderstood the paternal hand which directed them. Men will behold Jesus, when their eyes are pure enough to see him, coming in all his spiritual glory, when his kingdom is prepared to become one of the kingdoms of the Father, as the dwelling-place of pure spirits.

(Matth. xxiv. 31; Mark xiii. 27.)—Every creature is under the eye of the Lord, whatever the region which it inhabits, and none can escape his piercing gaze. Therefore let none of you hope to evade his justice, for the day of reckoning will come, when every man will pay his debt; though some will be reckoned with more strictly than others. Those who are willing will be more lightly treated than those who hope to evade the justice of their Creator. There will be others who started later than you, and could not reach the same point. The justice of the Lord will assign each his share with equity, and everyone will receive according to his merits, and especially his sincerity.

(Matth. xxiv. 31; Mark xiii. 27.)—In these passages, you may understand heaven to mean space. Matthew speaks of the spirits inhabiting space, who shall come to dwell on your planet; and Mark speaks of all the various classes of spirits. You can understand that when the renovation of your planet has been completed, many of you will be purified from all stains, and will thus have laid aside your own garments, till it shall please the Lord to clothe you afresh. Others will have made less progress, and will require to pass through the last phases to complete their purification, and will still

Digitized by Google

be incarnate on your planet during its last revolutions. It is in reference to this that Mark speaks; not that renovation will be effected on living matter, but because many of you will still be living on earth during the last crisis. But the changes to be effected in the human organism will not take place suddenly, or within the limits of one material existence. They will be brought about gradually, and always by means of reincarnations which will effect a gradual modification and improvement of human matter at every new phase.

(Luke xxi. 28.)—The word redemption in the thought of the Master, stands for regeneration. And your regeneration is truly near, for the guardian spirits of man have already begun to descend to you, to prepare the advent of the kingdom of love and charity. The Messiahs, or the especial messengers of the Lord, will come among you in succession, aided by missionary spirits; and the planetary events consequent upon your moral progress will also succeed each other in the course of ages, to effect the progressive purification and transformation of your world.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 32-35. MARK, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 28-31. LUKE, CHAP. XXI. VERSES 29-33.

Parable of the Fig-Tree.

Matth. xxiv. (32) Learn a parable from the fig-tree. When its young branch is already tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. (33) So also ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is nigh, at the doors. (34) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall by no means pass away until all these things shall be fulfilled. (35) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Mark xiii. (28) And learn the parable from the fig-tree. When the young branch is already tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. (29) So also you, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is near, at the doors. (30) Verily I say unto you that this generation shall by no means pass away until all these things shall be fulfilled. (31) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Luke xxi. (29) And he spoke a parable to them. You see the fig-tree and all the trees. (30) When they already shoot forth, you look on them, and know that summer is already near. (31) So also you,

Digitized by Google

when you see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is near. (32) Verily I say unto you that this generation shall by no means pass away, till all these things shall be fulfilled. (33) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

§ 271. (Matth. xxiv. 32, 33; Mark xiii. 28, 29; Luke xxi. 29–31.)—The parable or similitude of the fig-tree is only a further development of the idea of Jesus regarding the appearance of the sign of the Son of Man in heaven on the approach of your redemption. He designed to make a stronger impression both on his hearers, and on succeeding generations; and more especially on those who, like you, should behold the promised advent of the Spirit of Truth on the horizon by the New Revelation, and should be required to understand the Master's words in spirit and in truth. Do not lose sight of what we have said before of the kingdom of Jesus, the Son of Man, as the personification of his morality; and of the physical progress of your planet and its humanity, always corresponding with your moral and intellectual progress, of which it is the result. You will then understand that if the advent of the kingdom of God, and of the Son of Man, is near, both will draw nearer and nearer in proportion to the accomplishment of the events predicted. The advent of the kingdom of love and charity, and consequently the complete purification and transformation of your planet and its humanity, will also draw nearer and nearer.

(Matth. xxiv. 34; Mark xiii. 30; Luke xxi. 32.)—The Master's words were designedly hidden under the veil of the letter, like all the allegorical expressions which he used concerning his future advent and the end of the world. All his prophecies, coupled with those revealed to John in the Isle of Patmos, were intended as a means of human progress, and were designed to leave the men of that and succeeding generations in doubt and uncertainty as to their actual meaning. The literal meaning of the words according to the letter which killeth, would be absurd, and time has shewn them to be false. But interpreted according to the Spirit which giveth life, Jesus spoke of the generation of incarnate spirits then living on

Digitized by Google

your earth, who have since been reclothed, and who will still live reincarnated on your planet during the last phases of the moral and physical transformation of your earth and its humanity. The mystery of Reincarnation pervades all the teachings of Jesus, and is the only key which will enable you to understand them.

(Matth. xxiv. 35, &c.)—Everything in space, and all worlds, like your earth, passes in the physical order into the crucible of Creation, in the sense that, according to the laws of destruction, reproduction and progress, everything is renewed, purified and transformed, to proceed from the infinitely little to the infinitely great, in universal life and harmony. But the words of Jesus, the organ of the Omnipotent Father, shall not pass away, for they are immutable and eternal, like the law of progress for the spirit, in the physical, moral and intellectual order; and the natural laws, in the material and fluidic order. His words shall not pass away, for they are the principle, and means of progress in the lower worlds of trials and expiations; and the only way which can lead man towards the superior worlds.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 36–39. MARK, CHAP. XIII.—VERSES 32–37. LUKE, CHAP. XXI. VERSES 34–38.

Times of Change Unknown.

Matth. xxiv. (36) But no man knows of this day and hour, neither the angels of the heavens, but the Father only. (37) And as it was in the days of Noah, so also shall be the coming of the Son of Man. (38) For as they were in the days before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered into the ark, (39) And knew not until the flood came and destroyed them all, so also shall be the coming of the Son of Man.

Mark xiii. (32) But concerning this day and hour, no man knoweth, neither the angels who are in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. (33) Be on your guard, watch and pray, for you know not when is the time. (34) As a man going abroad leaves his house, and hands over his possessions to his servants, and assigns his work to each, and to the porter to watch. (35) Watch ye therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house comes, at evening, or at midnight, or at cock-crow, or in the morning, (36) Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. (37) And what I say to you, I say to all, Watch.

Luke xxi. (34) And take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts should be oppressed with debauchery and drunkenness, and the anxieties of

Digitized by Google

life, and that day come upon you unawares. (35) For as a snare shall it come upon all those resting on the face of the whole earth. (36) Therefore watch ye and pray in every season that ye may be deemed worthy to escape all these things which are about to come to pass, and to stand in the presence of the Son of Man. (37) And in the daytime he was teaching in the Temple, and at night he went out and abode on the hill called the Mount of Olives. (38) And all the people came to him early in the morning in the Temple, to hear him.

§ 272 (Matth. xxiv. 36; Mark xiii. 32.)—Jesus led men to perceive how vain it would be for them to seek into the mysteries of the future, which God alone can foresee. He thus condemned beforehand the idea of the divinity which he foreknew would be ascribed to him by men during the time needful to transform a material into a spiritual religion. God always excuses sincere error in opinions. Pride, hypocrisy, deceit, and lying are the only faults punished, for these only are really culpable. Thus, the sincere error of those who believe in the divinity of Christ is excused by God, and they will receive light afterwards; but those who insist on the divinity of Christ, and struggle to maintain it, although they do not believe in it themselves; and knowingly reject the new Revelation, although believing it to be true, are traffickers in Christianity, and hypocrites; and a long and painful expiation awaits them.

Good and evil always exist side by side on your planet, which is still one of the inferior worlds; and evil is often employed to lead to good, in the sense that the Lord's paternal hand directs evil in such a manner as to cause it to bring forth good fruits. Consequently, when men are sufficiently developed, morally and intellectually, to behold the truth, without veil or disguise, though some endeavour to perpetuate error, the Lord has permitted a brighter light to shine forth, which shall make everything plain at once; for the truth will appear suddenly to the eyes of men, stripped of everything which concealed it, and will shine with a much brighter lustre than if they had been gradually accustomed to behold it in its purity.

You can perceive that if Jesus had been God, or a portion of God, and equal to him, he also would know what God only knows. But by speaking as he did, he clearly explained

Digitized by Google

that whatever might be the extent of his knowledge and power relatively to the spirits around him, he could not be equal to God; for however perfect he might be, he was nevertheless a created spirit, and therefore could never equal the Uncreated Creator; God. He also implied that whatever the elevation of a spirit, or whatever his rank in the spirit-hierarchy, he can never equal in knowledge and power Him from whose will everything proceeds. This was an act of humility on the part of him who is the greatest of the great on your planet.

Men, who are so vain of yourselves, imitate his humility, and do not strive to equal Him who rules over all by seeking to penetrate into the mysteries of the future; for this would result in your shame and confusion. If you abandon yourselves to vain pride by trying to penetrate further into the mysteries of the real life than is given you at present, you will be led into fatal errors. Spiritists, you know the dangers which you run by diving into such depths. Do not therefore venture into them inconsiderately, nor let a vain pride urge you to desire to penetrate further than your brethren into secrets which it is not yet permitted you to fathom. The task of each day is sufficient for itself. Leave to those who come after you the work which they must accomplish.

(Matth. xxiv. 37–39.)—These words were designedly veiled to meet the requirements of the present and the future, and Jesus alluded to Noah's deluge, which was the only one remembered at that period. This deluge was only a partial renovation; or one of the planetary phases of your planet and its inhabitants, which gave birth to new products. As everything is in harmony throughout nature, when the human organization is modified, the products of the earth are modified to follow the general progress. Until the complete renovation of your planet, incarnations will vary little by little, as the correlative changes of the planet may require; but this variation will be partial. Everything will take place according to the law of wisdom and order which directs the universe. Thus

Digitized by Google

some portions of the earth will receive more advanced spirits, and consequently incarnations corresponding with their degree of advancement; while others will remain under conditions nearly similar to yours at present.

(Matth. xxiv. 37–39; Mark xiii. 33, 37; Luke xxi. 34, 36.—Jesus desired to persuade men to work at their progress by overcoming the predominance of matter, and thus to keep themselves always in expectation of those things which were to happen, though veiled by the letter; and which were foretold as liable to happen at any moment in a very near future. Men were thus compelled to exercise a constant vigilance over themselves, and were incited both to constant ardour in progress, and to an unalterable hope in the promises of the Lord. A spirit should always hold himself in the Lord's presence by prayer. He should pray for his own advancement, and for that of his incarnate brethren; he should pray for all when he is at liberty, and prayer then becomes action; for you must not suppose that when Jesus enjoins constant prayer, he requires that either man or spirit should always be at his devotions, as you understand the term. The efficacy of prayer lies in the good words which should follow your uttered prayers, like an Amen which is agreeable to the Lord. Pray without ceasing, to avert the stroke of judgment, for the good works which complete your prayers wrap you in a mantle of purity in the eyes of the Lord.

(Luke xxi. 36.)—These words, like those previously quoted, "This generation shall not pass away till all these things are fulfilled," contain a necessary allusion to the reincarnation of those who have fallen behind, and will be reincarnated at those points of your planet where the cataclysms resulting from planetary changes will occur; and the position occupied by those who will be sufficiently advanced to be in the superior worlds at the time of these events, ready to come to your purified and transformed planet, and to follow its ascending course at the period when Jesus will appear afresh, but this time in his full spiritual glory.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 40–44. LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 39–40.

Need for Vigilance.

Matth. xxiv. (40) Then shall two men be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (41) Two women shall be grinding in the mill; one shall be taken, and the other left. (42) Watch therefore, for you know not at what hour your Lord cometh. (43) But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have permitted his house to be broken into. (44) Therefore be ye also ready, for in an hour you think not of, the Son of Man cometh.

Luke xii. (39) But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken into. (40) Therefore be ye also ready, for in an hour you think not of, the Son of Man cometh.

§ 273 (Matth. xxiv. 40, 41.)—We refer you to the explanations already given of similar words spoken by Jesus at another time and place. Some will profit by the regeneration, and others will be cast down on the inferior planets; thus one portion of mankind will advance, and the other will be unworthy to share in the new incarnations.

(Matth. xxiv. 42–44; Luke xii. 39, 40.)—Jesus insists and dwells upon the uncertainty of the day and hour of the physical and moral events which he had already predicted, to keep men unceasingly watchful and on their guard. How few yet perceive the signs of the times,* of the new era of the Christianity of Christ, the dawn of the regeneration of your humanity. The work of progress pursues its course, but you know not how far it must go, nor when it will please the Master to put the last touch to the work of your regeneration. Hold yourselves on your guard, and ready; for you may be surprised when you are unprepared; and the Lord rejects the idle servants who have neglected to look for his coming.

* These words were dictated in August 1863.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 45–51. LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 41–46.

Parable of the Faithful and Unfaithful Servants.

Matth. xxiv. (45) Who then is the wise and faithful servant, whom his lord shall set over his household to give them their food in season? (46) Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. (47) Verily I say unto you that he will set him over all his possessions. (48) But if that wicked servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, (49) And shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, (50) The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looks not for him, and at an hour which he knows not, (51) And shall cut him in twain, and shall appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Luke xii. (41) And Peter said to him, Lord, dost thou speak this parable to us, or to all? (42) And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom the lord shall set over his household, to give out the measure of corn in due season? (43) Happy is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. (44) In truth I say unto you, he will place him over all his possessions. (45) But if that servant shall say in his heart, My lord delays to come; and shall begin to beat the youths and maidens, and to eat and drink, and be drunken, (46) The lord of that servant shall come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour which he knows not, and shall cut him in twain, and appoint him his lot with the unfaithful.

§ 274. These words apply to those who have accepted the direction of their brethren, and are appointed to guide them in the path of progress, and to diffuse light among them. Happy are those faithful servants who distribute food in due season, and to each his due measure of corn! They scatter light and truth among those whom they are appointed to direct, in proportion as it is revealed to themselves, in the course of time; and they aid the generations to advance by word, and especially by example, instead of seeking to mislead them. Their reward will be great, for they will see the paths which lead to perfection opening wider and wider before them, and these will give them access to the Almighty Lord, who will cause them to share in his intelligence, power, and love, in universal life and harmony.

But those who abuse their authority, and the confidence of which they are unworthy, to mislead those whom they ought to guide, and to bind a bandage over the eyes of

Digitized by Google

those whom they ought to enlighten; and who give themselves up to the pleasures of humanity, abusing the wealth which they ought not even to touch, will be severely punished. These wicked servants are more guilty, and will be punished more severely, than others, for they take a much greater responsibility upon themselves, and will have to endure the punishment of the faults which they have caused others to commit, in addition to that due to their own. The brighter and stronger the light shines, and the louder and clearer the voice of the Lord is heard, the more terrible will be the account which those unworthy servants must render, who ought to have guided and instructed those who were entrusted to their care; for the more they have received, the more will be expected of them.

He who is charged with the guidance of his brethren incurs a much heavier responsibility than others. He must necessarily be supposed to be superior to them; but if, instead of devoting his care to those who are entrusted to him, he neglects or misguides them, he renders them unable to advance, and to do the work of the Master. Then the unfaithful servant who undertook to guide his weaker brethren will have a strict account to render. He will have to atone, not only for the evil which he has done, but for the evil which he has caused, or which he might have prevented, but did not. He will then be rejected as unfaithful, but will still serve as a guide to the blind, and an adviser to the deaf; and will then regret bitterly that he did not accomplish his mission when he was with intelligent beings, capable of understanding him. Then indeed there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for the spirit who is exiled to the inferior worlds will suffer the more in proportion as he has been more advanced in this one. Mighty ones of the earth, whoever you may be, who have asked and obtained the mission to guard and direct your brethren in the paths of physical, moral and intellectual order, what we have just told you, according to the Spirit, explains the Master's words

Digitized by Google

in the spiritual order, but it is also applicable to you in the temporal order, both as regards reward and punishment.

LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 47, 48.

Responsibility of the Spirit.

(47) But the servant who knows the will of his Lord, and does not prepare for him, nor do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; (48) But he who knew it not, and shall do things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whom much has been given, much will be required of him; and they will seek more abundantly from him with whom they deposit much.

§ 275. It is obvious that he who commits a fault after being forewarned, is more guilty than he who is only aware that he has done evil, but has no clear idea of it. Thus, the brighter the light shines before your eyes, and the more warnings and advice you receive, the more guilty you will become, if you wander from the path which is pointed out to you. Much will be required of him to whom much has been given; and he ought to make fruitful what has been entrusted to him. The good seed sown in him should yield the fullest measure possible to his moral and intellectual development; an hundredfold, sixtyfold, or fortyfold.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXV.—VERSES 1–13.

Parable of the Ten Virgins.

(1) Then the kingdom of the heavens shall be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. (2) And five of them were wise, and five foolish. (3) Those who were foolish took their lamps, but took no oil with them. (4) But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. (5) And while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. (6) And at midnight there was a shouting, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. (7) Then all these virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. (8) And the foolish said to the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. (9) But the wise answered and said, Not so, lest there should not be enough for us and you, but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves. (10) And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they who were ready went in with him to the nuptials, and the door was shut. (11) And afterwards came also the remaining virgins, saying,

Digitized by Google

Lord, Lord, open to us. (12) And he answered and said to them, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. (13) Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man cometh.

§ 276. Some have not understood this parable, and others have falsified its sense and object. It was designed to keep men on their guard, and to teach them that they should not wait till the last moment to think of reformation and improvement, lest it should be too late. The virtues of some cannot atone in any way for the vices of others. You can only aid your brethren by your advice and example, but you cannot make them sharers in your oil; that is, in the merit of your works, which can only be applicable to those who perform them. Therefore let everyone work at his own reformation and advancement, and then the indifferent or the sluggard will see that it is time for him to set to work, lest, while he is thinking about it, he should be summoned unawares before the Judge. You must not suppose that Jesus intended to preach selfishness, but should understand that he only desired to warn you against the carelessness which leads you to postpone until next day an action that ought to be performed immediately, relying on the saints, priestly intercessions, and clerical absolutions to ensure your salvation; whereas you cannot attain it by any means but by your own personal actions.

(Verses 6–13).—As the wise virgins did not wish to discourage those who had neglected to take proper precautions in time, they sent them to those who might be able to help them. In the present case, the former knew that what merit they possessed was scarcely enough for themselves, and they could not impart it to anyone; while even if they could, their sharing it would have been insufficient. Time pressed, and they were incapable of aiding those who needed help, for they themselves had just been called. Therefore let the negligent virgins who have made no provision beforehand, go to those who can give them needful aid. The oil-merchants who can replenish the empty lamps are the good spirits of the Lord. They

Digitized by Google

will sell it, for in aiding others to advance, they themselves advance also. Everything is in common between you and them, and the price they receive is in the progress which they help you to make, according to the law of brotherly aid and friendship. But if the virgins wait too long before they seek their aid, and are too slow in asking for the oil which should sustain the lamps, without which they cannot enter with the bridegroom, they will arrive too late, and when they believe their lamps are sufficiently filled, the banquet-hall will be closed. In truth, when idle or negligent spirits behold the approach of the regeneration, and seeing the progress which their brethren have made, desire to walk by their side, they will be unable to follow them, but will be stopped on the threshold of the new home, and will be obliged to complete on an inferior planet the progress which they have neglected on this. Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour when the bridegroom will come; the day and hour of the regeneration when the Master will arrive.

LUKE, CHAP. XII.—VERSES 35–38.

Watchfulness.

(35) Let your loins be girded, and your lamps burning. (36) And be yourselves like men expecting their lord, when he returns from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks, they may open to him immediately. (37) Blessed are those servants whom the Lord shall find watching when he comes; verily I say unto you that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down, and come and wait on them. (38) And if he shall come in the second or in the third watch, and shall find them thus, blessed are these servants.

§ 277. Be always vigilant, and always ready to appear before your Master, and to receive him when it is his pleasure either to send emissaries, or to come himself. The Master came, and the Apostles were ready to receive him, and their reward has been great; but he will come again. The night is advancing, the second watch begins with the new era to which Jesus alludes in thought; and he sends his messengers, the organs of the Spirit of Truth, to prepare for his coming. Hold yourselves in readiness for the third

Digitized by Google

watch, for he desires to find you ready to receive him, and purified by the merit of your works, which will cause your souls to shine with a pure, warm light in the presence of the Lord. "He will make you sit down, and will wait upon you;" for he will show you the unveiled truth, and will lead you to perfection.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXV.—VERSES 14–30. LUKE, CHAP. XIX.—VERSES 11–27.

Parable of the Talents.

Matth. xxv. (14) For it is like a man going abroad, who called his own servants, and entrusted to them his possessions. (15) And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went abroad. (16) And he who had received the five talents, traded with them, and gained five talents more. (17) So also he who had received two, gained two more. (18) But he who had received the one talent, went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. (19) And after a long time, the lord of these servants comes, and settles his account with them. (20) And coming to him who had received five talents, he brought him five more talents, saying, Lord, thou hast given me five talents, behold I have gained five other talents with them. (21) And his lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will appoint thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (22) And he also who had received two talents, came and said, Lord, thou hast given me two talents, behold I have gained two other talents with them. (23) His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will appoint thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (24) And he who had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not scattered. (25) And I was afraid, and went away, and hid thy talent in the earth; lo thou hast thine own. (26) And his lord answered and said to him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knowest that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered. (27) Therefore shouldst thou have put my money to the bankers, and when I came, I should have received my own with interest. (28) Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. (29) For to him who hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him who hath not shall be taken away even what he hath. (30) And cast ye the unprofitable servant into the darkness outside; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Luke xix. (11) And while they were listening to these things, he added and spoke a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and they thought that the kingdom of God was immediately about to appear. (12) Therefore he said, A certain nobleman went into a distant country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. (13) And having called

Digitized by Google

ten of his servants, he gave them ten minæ, and said to them, Trade till I come. (14) But his citizens hated him, and sent an embassy after him, saying, We will not have this man to rule over us. (15) And it came to pass that when he returned after receiving his kingdom, he ordered those servants to be called to him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know what had been gained by trading. (16) And the first came and said, Lord, thy mina has gained ten minæ. (17) And he said to him, Well done, good servant, because thou hast been faithful over a very little, thou shalt have authority over ten cities. (18) And the second came, saying, Lord, thy mina has gained five minæ. (19) And he said to him also, And thou shalt be over five cities. (20) And another came saying, Lord, here is thy mina, which I have kept laid by in a napkin. (21) For I feared thee, because thou art a hard man; thou takest what thou hast not laid by, and reapest where thou hast not sown. (22) And he saith to him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest me to be a hard man, taking what I had not laid up, and reaping what I did not sow. (23) Ought you not therefore to have given my money into the bank, and then when I came, I should have exacted it with interest? (24) And he said to the bystanders, Take away the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minæ. (25) And they said to him, Lord, he has ten minæ! (26) For I say unto you, that unto whomsoever hath shall be given, and from him who hath not, shall be taken away even what he seemeth to have. (27) But as for my enemies, who did not wish me to reign over them, bring them here, and slay them in my presence.

§ 278. We have already told you that the parables of Jesus were often repeated with slight variations, being the same in meaning, but appropriated to the intelligence of those who heard them. Such is the case with the parables of the talents, and of the ten minæ.

In the parable of the minæ, Jesus alludes more especially (verses 11, 12, 14, 17) to the laws which he came to teach; to the ingratitude of men, who rejected them by falsifying or evading them, and to the punishment which would await those hardened spirits who persisted in their selfishness and pride.

The threat of the king who commands his rebellious subjects to be slain before him, alludes to the sentence of banishment which will be pronounced against hardened offenders when the time of general retribution shall come. It has the same meaning as verse 30 of Matthew, relative to the unprofitable servant being thrown into the darkness without; that is, removed from your planet, and cast down on the inferior planets, during the separation of the darnel from the good corn. The king's threat, and the fate of the

Digitized by Google

unprofitable servant were materialized to inspire fear in the Jews who heard them, and who understood them literally and not spiritually.

Apart from the variations just mentioned, the object of the two parables is the same, and the same explanations will apply to both, though they were spoken at different times and places. These parables, like that of the ten virgins, have either not been understood, or their meaning and object has been misrepresented. The reason of all criticisms, though the results differ, is always the same. When the parabolic sense is apparently limited, men take the letter; and when the letter is limited, they seek for a hidden meaning. Thus the meaning of the parables of Jesus is either obscured or falsified. Let those who would destroy without exactly knowing why, read with more attention and without bias. And if it is not too much for their pride, let them also appeal in heart to Him who quickens the intelligence, and they will understand better; but they have not yet reached this point. At present* they are overthrowing a tottering edifice, and they heap the materials on the ground, without either asking what may be the result, or regarding the confusion which may arise from their conduct, or pitying the weak minds who still shelter themselves under the old Church. They cast down and overturn, but the time will come when their successors will sort the stones, choose the good materials, cast away the bad, and rebuild an edifice on immovable foundations, whence men can draw love, charity, faith, and hope.

We cannot too often remind you that all the parables of Jesus have a hidden meaning which applies to future ages, but were designed to be understood literally by those who heard them, and therefore deal with material subjects in accordance with the manners and intelligence of the age. Consequently all these parables admit both of a veiled and prophetic sense, and of a material sense adapted to the intelligence of the period. We now give you the meaning

* These words were medianimically dictated in August, 1863.

Digitized by Google

of the parables of the talents and of the minæ, in spirit and in truth. The Lord never demands of any man more than what is just, having regard to your limited capacities and human weakness; but he wishes you to use all your efforts to advance, and has given you the germ which you ought to develop. Do not think, because you are less highly gifted than your brethren, that you may therefore rest in idleness. Do not argue that you are not clever; that you have been disinherited; that the Lord requires so much from his creatures that it would be impossible for you to satisfy him; and that you would deserve even less by making useless efforts, because you would draw down upon you still more of what you call his wrath, but which is really his justice. The Lord is just and equitable, and although you have not all reached the same point, and although all do not appear to be gifted with the same number of talents, yet you may always succeed, by perseverance, in deserving more. You have all started from the same point, and will all arrive at the same goal; but some of you are more indolent than others. From these, the Lord takes away the "talent" or "mina" which they possess; for as their idleness and ignorance renders it impossible for them to keep up with the faithful servants, they will be cast into surroundings suited to their dispositions, under inferior conditions to those which they have enjoyed. They will then suffer both from the loss of their position, and from the more severe labour necessary to regain it. Jesus did not mean that the Lord who is just in all things would hand over to his active servants the small amount of virtue and activity possessed by his unprofitable servants; but only that the former who have deserved more will advance more rapidly, and receive more of the Master's favours.

In speaking of the third servant, Jesus alludes to those malevolent spirits who seek to screen their own misdeeds by accusing others of them. Far be it from the "Son" to accuse the "Father," and the reply put into the mouth of the Master, means, "Since you consider me so harsh and exacting, gathering where I have not stored, and reaping

Digitized by Google

where I have not sown, how could you sleep thus, and make no efforts to satisfy me? Ought you not, on the contrary, if you did not feel strong enough to succeed by your own efforts, to have gone to those who could have assisted you, to return me the interest of what I gave you; that is, progress?" The "bankers" spiritually signify those who could develop the love of progress in the third servant; and consequently are represented according to the letter, as those who would pay the interest which the master required from his servant. According to the hidden meaning of the parable, you must understand bankers to mean those who can aid others to advance, both on earth and in space, whether incarnate or errant spirits.

You should also understand the words of Jesus according to the material sense. The law of Moses forbade taking of interest, as well as slavery, among the Hebrews. Consequently it was a foreign practice; and according to perverted interpretations, it was maintained that the prohibition applied only to Hebrews among themselves, but not to a Hebrew in his dealings with foreigners; and that any exaction, though blameable when used towards a Hebrew, was just in the case of a foreigner. There is no question here about banking as understood in your own days, but exchange. This transaction allowed the man who received a sum on deposit, to traffic with it by exchanging it for some description of merchandise, and dividing the profits more or less equally with the owner of the money. Remember the thousand tricks invented by cupidity to evade the laws; look what passes around you, and you will understand that there were money-changers, receiving money, and paying interest, or giving value for it, according to the necessities of the age.

(Matth. xxv. 29; Luke xix. 26.)—These words are the same as those which Jesus had already spoken in the parable of the sower; you will find them explained at vol. ii. pp. 45–47.

We now pass on to the veiled and prophetic meaning of the talents and the minæ. The thought of Jesus included

Digitized by Google

the period of his earthly mission, his return to the higher regions at his Ascension, the period preparatory to his return to your planet, which is the new spiritual era of the Christianity of Christ, and the period of his own return. He warns men to pursue the development of their moral and intellectual progress with active, earnest, and sustained efforts, and that every one will be required to give an account of the faculties which he has received from the Lord. All can use and develope these faculties with the aid of the "bankers," during their life on earth and in space; and this aid they ought to seek. God has given men time, expiation, and reincarnation to help them to fulfil their task, for the darnel must grow by the side of the good corn until the regeneration, of which no man knows the day and hour. At this period, the spirits who still remain guilty, rebellious, idle, ignorant, proud, or selfish, and are thus unable or unworthy to participate in the regeneration, will be removed from your earth, and cast down to the inferior planets. Their grief and remorse will be great, and their expiation will be long. The labour of regaining their lost position will be more severe; but those who have laboured at their progress in proportion to their capacities, will be rewarded according to their works and the purity of their intentions, at the time of the classification which will take place during this period of regeneration and purification; and afterwards upon your purified and regenerated planet.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXV.—VERSES 31–46.

Parable of the Last Judgment.

(31) When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. (32) And all nations shall be assembled before him, and he shall separate them from each other, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the kids. (33) And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the kids on his left. (34) Then shall the King say to those on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit ye the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world. (35) For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; (36) Naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came to me. (37 Then

Digitized by Google

shall the righteous answer him saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink? (38) And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in; or naked and clothed thee? (39) Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? (40) And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (41) Then shall he say also unto those on the left, Depart from me, ye accursed, into the age-lasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. (42) For I was hungry, and ye gave me not to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; (43) I was a stranger, and you received me not; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. (44) Then shall these also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? (45) Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have not done it unto one of the least of these, neither have ye done it unto me. (46) And these shall go away into age-lasting punishment, but the righteous into age-lasting life.

§ 279. These words have formed the foundation of many human opinions and interpretations. When taken literally, they have been misunderstood and falsely interpreted, but everything has its object in the course of progress, and contributes to the purification and progress of the worlds and their humanities; and they must now be explained to you in spirit and in truth.

Jesus desired to set before his disciples a vivid picture of the Last Judgment, which should make an indelible impression on their minds. Men who were accustomed to tremble before the judges, and could hardly be restrained by any laws, however severe, needed a vivid material illustration of the judgment to which they would be subjected, and of its consequences. The chief priests of the Temple were the judges in Israel, and they frequently passed terrible and arbitrary sentences, which yet were far from imposing respect for the laws.

(Verses 31, 32.)—Men have understood "the end," and have classed the events together. Jesus spoke of the successive periods which should run their course until the mild true light shall enlighten the world. The throne of the glory of Jesus is the period when the masses shall bow to his law. His throne will then be finally established in the hearts of all creatures, and the angels of the Lord will surround him, and will descend towards you. Has not this

Digitized by Google

period already begun? Is not the Saviour's throne prepared to receive him, and do not the angels of the Most High descend to teach you to sing the glory of the Almighty, by preparing you for the advent of the Spirit by the practice of justice, charity, and love; and to open before you the sources of intellectual progress through moral progress, by teaching you to be meek and humble in heart, and disinterested and devoted to your brethren? Are not the nations all gathered under the eyes of the Saviour, and can you not perceive that the expression is materialized, like all others in the Gospels?

Has not the separation been going on from the beginning? Ever since the appearance of man upon your planet, those spirits who have deserved to inhabit superior portions of your earth, or higher worlds, have been promoted to these higher conditions, while guilty spirits, in proportion to their guilt and need of progress, have been sent by way of punishment and expiation, either into inferior conditions on your earth, or to planets inferior to yours. Up to your own days, the darnel has been allowed to grow with the wheat, and will be permitted to do so until the regeneration is about to be accomplished, and the purification of your earth is gradually effected. But at this period the separation will be complete, and the guilty spirits who are opposed to progress will no longer be permitted to reincarnate themselves upon your earth. Only those who have become capable and worthy of walking in the paths of the regeneration will be admitted, and will be placed under the necessary conditions. Jesus alludes here to this separation, which will be entirely accomplished when your planet enters upon its fluidic phases. The period of this separation has been falsely interpreted as a single and sudden event; but this is figurative. No definite period can be assigned for this progressive work; but it will be the age which will precede the complete purification of your earth. Jesus will return among you when your humanity is ready to attain to moral perfection, and his coming will be hailed with a unanimous cry of joy and homage: "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord."

Digitized by Google

(Verses 33–46.)—These words are also figurative, and appropriate to the intelligence of those whom Jesus desired to impress and awaken. The just, on the right hand, are the spirits who have profited by the regeneration upon your earth, or those who have come from other worlds, sufficiently purified and advanced, who will be allowed to dwell on your regenerated planet under conditions needful to progress there, and to share in its ascending course. They will be "the blessed of the Father," because they will have worked actively at their personal and mutual progress. God blesses those who labour at their own perfection, and at that of their brethren; and blessings descend on those whose works draw them down. The place reserved for the chosen and the worthy means the lofty regions where every spirit is called, from his origin, to receive his share of the inheritance when he shall have attained his spiritual majority. The just shall enter into age-long life; they will walk in the path of progress which will give them spiritual life in eternity, exempt from any incarnation, when they shall have become pure spirits.

The accursed, on the left of the King, are the guilty spirits who will depart to regions where they will suffer constantly, either in the errant state in space, or in the incarnate state. These are regions of expiation, but also of trials and progress, perpetually renewed by slow and progressive purifications and transformations on the inferior worlds, which are prepared for the guilty spirits in the sense that they serve for their dwelling, and are both hell and purgatory to those who are figuratively called, the "devil and his angels," according to their degree of perversity; for they are places of punishment, and also of expiation, reparation, and progress. Such is the spirit of the parable; the letter, which veils the spirit, was purposely given by Jesus under a material form, in regard to the barbarous ages through which it would pass, that it might govern them by inspiring them with terror.

The humane doctrine of eternal punishment had also an object. It was the result of the reign of the letter, which

Digitized by Google

was necessary for a time, until man had advanced sufficiently in the path of moral and intellectual progress. Have you not been told that the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life? These were prophetic words addressed to the future, which were intended to be understood and applied at the predicted time, when the spirit should illumine the letter by revealing its true sense. The threats of eternal fire and everlasting torments as the meaning of eternal punishment to the guilty spirit are fictitious, and never entered the thoughts of Jesus. Those who are banished will be cast into the regions of darkness. They will be sent to worlds of expiation where the spirit of evil rules with sovereign power, and will be condemned to live for ages longer in sorrow and suffering. It is there that there will be tears and groans, and it is there that the fire which is not quenched consumes the spirit whose perversity causes him to be rejected, and cast down upon those unhappy worlds where he will preserve the memory of what he has lost, and will believe that it is lost to him for ever. These are the flames which consume him and the demons which torture him. They are moral sufferings as regards the sensations of the spirit, but are nevertheless material in some measure, through the material sufferings inherent in incarnation; and a retrograded spirit will feel them much more keenly, especially if he has been rejected, when he might have progressed, and been received into the peace of the Lord. But the paternal hand of the Lord is extended over these poor exiles, as over all others; and in the course of ages, peace will finally return to them with remorse for their obduracy, and the desire of reparation. This will be effected by the omnipotence of God, through the immutable law of progress and perfectibility which he has established from all eternity, and which operates under the auspices of his infinite justice, goodness, and mercy.

But the banished spirit will only remember his past in the errant state. When he is free from the trammels of the flesh, he will understand his position, and perceive his faults. He may delude himself for a time, but afterwards, without

Digitized by Google

his regarding anything as really or apparently arbitrary on the part of the Lord, his whole past will be displayed before his eyes; and just as he can judge of the justice of his own condemnation, so will he also be able to appreciate the justice of the reward granted to the good labourers. Even in the state of incarnation, the retrograded spirit experiences an uneasiness which he cannot define, but which causes suffering to the man, and makes him feel superior to others around him, on account of the relative degradation of his own position.

(Verses 34 and 40.)—Jesus excludes the divinity falsely attributed to him by human interpretations, by declaring himself to be the brother of all men, the least of whom are all sons, like himself, of his Father, for he also is a created spirit, sprung from the same source and essence as themselves; and at the same time, he gives himself the title of King, and thus indicates, under a veil which was to be raised by the present spiritual revelation, his position as the protector and ruler of your planet.

(Verses 35–45.)—Jesus came to your world to deliver you from errors, superstitions, and vices by bringing you light, and establishing the bases and foundations of human regeneration, and tracing out and opening up the paths and means of progress. When he was about to depart, after having warned men of the separation between the darnel and the good corn; the good and the bad; he told them plainly why men were to be separated as sheep and kids. It was not because they professed such and such a faith, or adopted such and such a doctrine, or practised such and such a form of external worship; but some were placed on the right because they practised material, moral, and intellectual love and charity towards their brethren, while others were placed on the left for having neglected to do so.

Jesus does not speak of those who were not content with having done no good, but who had done positive evil. Their position was still more serious, and, as it is implied, there was no occasion to allude to it. Thus the clear and definite result of all the teachings of the Master is that you

Digitized by Google

should always endeavour to be charitable, and to make yourselves useful to your brethren in every possible manner. Everyone, whatever his material poverty, can always do some good amid the conditions in which he is placed, at least morally by his example, and by the teachings which may be found in the words of the Saviour, when rightly understood. It is this, "There is no salvation but in love and charity;" that is, there is no progress or advancement without. Whatever your opinions, doctrines, or outward religious rites and ceremonies, so long as you do not practise love and charity, you are necessarily in the bonds of pride and selfishness, and of the vices and passions which spring from them, and which degrade your humanity; and you still remain liable to expiation and expiatory incarnations on the inferior worlds.

The words of Jesus relate primarily to charity of spirit, and secondarily to the body, as the instrument of the incarnate spirit, and the agent of his trials, reparation, and progress. It is thus from the point of view of the necessities both of the body and of the spirit that you should practise love and charity towards your brethren.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 1–13. MARK, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 1–9.

Perfume Poured on the Head of Jesus.

Matth. xxvi. (1) And it came to pass that when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, (2) You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified. (3) Then the chief priests and scribes and the elders of the people assembled together in the court of the chief priest, who was called Caiaphas. (4) And they consulted together that they might seize Jesus by treachery, and put him to death. (5) But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there be a tumult among the people. (6) And while Jesus was at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, (7) A woman came to him having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head as he was reclining. (8) And when his disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, To what end is this waste? (9) For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. (10) But Jesus perceiving it, said to them, Why trouble ye the woman? For she has wrought a good work in me. (11) For you have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. (12) For she, having poured this ointment on my body, did it for my burial.

Digitized by Google

(13) Verily I say unto you that wherever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, this which she has done shall also be spoken of in memory of her.

Mark xiv. (1) And after two days was the Passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, and the chief priests and scribes sought to seize him by treachery, and put him to death. (2) But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there should be a tumult among the people. (3) And while he was at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she broke the box, and poured the ointment on his head. (4) And some were indignant in themselves, and said, (5) Why was this waste of the ointment, for it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and given to the poor. And they grumbled at her. (6) And Jesus said, Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has done a good work on me. (7) For you have the poor always with you, and whenever you will you can do them good; but me you have not always. (8) She hath done what she could; she came beforehand to anoint my body for the burial. (9) Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, this also which she hath done shall be spoken of in memory of her.

§ 280. Jesus again predicted his apparent death to his disciples, and in a more precise manner, by crucifixion. The act to which the woman was impelled by spirit-influence was designed to exhibit the fore-knowledge which Jesus possessed of his crucifixion and death, that when the event happened everyone might remember both this action and the words which he pronounced with reference to the future. The woman's action was as homage rendered to the Lord; but the disciples were still blinded by matter, and could only perceive the outward circumstances. When Jesus reproved their murmurs, he taught them that material sacrifices are not always sufficient, and that the spiritual side should also be regarded. Perfume was selected for this lesson on account of its ethereal nature, which made it more intelligible that sacrifices made from a spiritual point of view ought not to be regarded only from the material side; This action (on the part of the woman) arose from love and disinterestedness, and was a sign of the triumph of spirit over matter.

Jesus added, "You have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always;" and these words have not been understood in spirit and in truth. He alluded to his appearance on your earth in accordance with the necessities

Digitized by Google

of his earthly mission; and to the duration of his apparently human life. Those who interpret the words of Jesus from a human point of view, forgetful that he always ranked spiritual needs above all things, have falsely interpreted his words, "you have the poor always with you," by attributing to the Master a false, absurd, and ruinously retrograde doctrine, that material human poverty must always be the lot of your humanity on earth.

When Jesus spoke of the poor of the earth, he did not specially intend those who were deficient in worldly wealth, but all who are in any inferior position which requires the aid of benevolent men. His words apply to spirits who are comparatively inferior to others in intelligence; and thus not only to those who are materially poor, but more especially to those who are morally and intellectually poor. Yours is an inferior and progressive planet, and as with all others equally inferior, material and moral poverty is the result of trials. There will, therefore, always be those who are materially and morally poor, until the separation of the darnel from the good corn shall have been finished; that is, until the purification of your earth and its humanity shall have been wholly accomplished by the complete separation of the good and the wicked. But, as we have told you several times, the elevation of a planet does not imply equality of faculties. There will always be poor among you, even when material and moral poverty has ceased upon your planet. There will always be spirits who, although good and purified, are less advanced than others in various respects. These are intellectually poor; and those who are rich in intelligence and knowledge will richly impart to them of what they themselves possess. You must never forget that there will always be an intellectual hierarchy of spirits as regards universal knowledge, even when they have attained to moral perfection.

Material poverty will only cease among you with the cessation of all the moral infirmities which you must expiate by being continually re-born. Therefore rid yourselves of your vices, whether arising from the flesh, or from the spirit,

Digitized by Google

which should dominate matter; for you may be prosperous to-day, and poor to-morrow. The entire disappearance of material poverty, so that every man may live richly on the results of his labour, is a dream, so long as your moral purification has not softened your future expiations. Your associations, your benevolent institutions, and your freely-given alms are good, for they show your desire to do good, and to relieve the sufferings of your brethren; but without neglecting these material means, endeavour to improve the morality of men; and you may say that material misery has ceased upon your planet, when moral misery has been driven from it. Then will all men be enlightened and banded together for mutual aid, and work in common for the common good; but how far off is this blessed age on which you ought to enter! Prepare yourselves for its realization, and use every effort for this end by means of organized association, directed by heartfelt humility, disinterestedness, justice, love, and charity, for work in the material, moral, and intellectual order. Let the rich give abundantly to the poor, by bringing the tribute of their faculties into these associations, to diffuse and develop moral and intellectual education and instruction, and to lead men to understand the love of God and of the neighbour. Let each be for all, and all for each, in all associations, whether commercial, industrial, agricultural, moral, or intellectual; literary, religious, or scientific; and in every sphere of human activity, whether individual, civil, or social.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 14–19. MARK, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 10–16. LUKE, CHAP. XXII. VERSES 1–13.

Treachery of Judas.

Matth. xxvi. (14) Then went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests, and said, (15) What will you give me and I will betray him to you? And they agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver. (16) And after that, he sought an opportunity to betray him. (17) And on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, and said to him, How wilt thou that we should prepare for thee to eat the Passover? (18) And he said, Go into the

Digitized by Google

city to such a one, and say to him, The Teacher says, My time is at hand; I will prepare the Passover at thy house with my disciples. (19) And the disciples did as Jesus had arranged, and they made ready the Passover.

Mark xiv. (10) And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the high priests that he might betray him to them. (11) And when they heard it they rejoiced, and promised to give him money; and he sought how he could conveniently betray him. (12) And on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, when they were sacrificing the Passover, his disciples say to him, Where wilt thou that we should go to prepare for thee to eat the Passover? (13) And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, Go into the city and a man shall meet you carrying a jar of water. (14) Follow him, and where he shall enter, say to the master of the house, The Teacher says, Where is the lodging where I am to eat the Passover with my disciples? (15) And he will show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready for us. (16) And his disciples set out, and came into the city, and found it as he had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

Luke xxii. (1) And the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover. (2) And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might destroy him; for they feared the people. (3) And Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. (4) And he went out, and consulted with the chief priests and leaders how he might betray him to them. (5) And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. (6) And he consented, and sought for an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of the people. (7) And the day of unleavened bread came, on which the Passover must be sacrificed. (8) And he sent Peter and John saying, Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it. (9) And they said to him, Where wilt thou that we shall prepare it? (10) And he said to them, Behold, as you are entering the city, a man shall meet you carrying a jar of water; follow him into the house where he shall enter. (11) And say to the master of the house, The Teacher says to thee, Where is the lodging where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? (12) And he shall show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready. (13) And they went and found as he had said to them; and they made ready the Passover.

§ 281. The fulfilment of the predicted events was approaching; and Jesus sent Peter and John to a man whom he pointed out; and they met him, and everything came to pass as he had told them. We have already explained the prescience of Jesus (vol. ii. pp. 268 and 269). The Apostles had become used to such events, and paid no particular attention to them at the time; but at a later period they remembered all these predictions, which confirmed the prescience and mission of Jesus, both to themselves and to their disciples.

We must point out that the treason of Judas was not the result of predestination, which would amount to a denial of the justice of God, if you accept the ordinary interpretation

Digitized by Google

of this event. Judas was a spirit who was anxious to advance, but he was proud, and relied too much on his own strength. He had asked, in the spiritual state, to be allowed to take a share in the work of Christ, hoping for rich and abundant rewards. His guides vainly pointed out the obstacles which he would be unable to overcome; in vain they told him that he was still too weak to bear the weight of such a burden, and that the darkness of the flesh would hide from him both his resolutions and his hopes; and that his greedy and envious instincts would awaken, and would inevitably lead him to a fall which would be terrible in proportion to the obstinacy with which he had persisted in his determination; but he would listen to nothing.

Jesus knew Judas, and accepted his aid, and the terrible lesson which awaited him enabled him to arise finally purified from all the vices which he had retained. It was with a view to this end, which he foresaw, that Jesus permitted the action of Judas; for you may be well assured that nothing can happen without being directed by eternal justice and ineffable love.

Judas was proud, envious, and luxurious, and his poor and humble condition preyed upon him. He was blinded by the renown of Jesus, and could not forgive him for attracting so much attention. Pride, envy, and the love of luxury consequently drew him into avarice, hypocrisy, and theft.* O poor humanity, how much you still follow the example of Judas! How many are still pained by the reflection of the glory, renown, and esteem which shine upon others! How often you torture your spirit to find an opportunity to *sell* him who inspires you with envious feelings, the causes and consequences of which you do not even admit to yourselves! How many of you try to lower those of your brethren in public opinion, who appear to you to be unjustly elevated! With what artifice do you study the moment to seize upon them, and to deliver them over to the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees of your age, by treacherously

* See John xii. 6.

Digitized by Google

seeking out the faults and failings of those whom you wish to destroy, and laying them open before those who, like yourselves, are awaiting a favourable opportunity to injure them!

Ah, you would do better to employ your intelligence in discovering the means of hiding from all eyes the real or apparent faults of your brethren. Beware of acting like Judas, for you do not know how terrible is the expiation of him who sells the Just One, and betrays his Master. Say not, "This is not my case; for him whom I degrade in public opinion, and undermine secretly, and all whose faults I spy out in the shade, to display them openly in broad daylight before the eyes of all men, is not the Just One, and is not my Master." What do you know of this? Do you really know, proud Judas, when you yield to such base envy, whether he may not be your master in the sense that if you were in his place, you might sink lower? Brethren, distrust yourselves; all, without exception; for you are always liable to allow Satan, the demon of pride and envy, to enter your hearts; and you yield very easily to his suggestions. May the Lord protect you, for the fall is easy, and the recovery terrible!

You are told that the disciples did as Jesus had commanded; they found everything as he had told them, and they prepared all that was necessary for the Passover which Jesus was about to celebrate with Judas Iscariot, whom he knew was ready to betray him, as well as with the eleven faithful disciples. In our remarks on the following verses, we will explain the motives and object of the Passover in the Master's thought. He celebrated it with his disciples, not in a synagogue, or in a temple built by human hands for worship, but in a large furnished upper room, which was intended, under the empire and veil of the letter, to become the foundation of an outward religious rite. But in spirit and in truth, it was a purely symbolic and emblematic action

§ 282. What do you mean by saying that if the treason of Judas had been predestined, it would amount to a denial of the justice of God?

Digitized by Google

According to the human interpretations of these events, Judas was delivered over to the devil beforehand, being created vile, base, envious, greedy, and sanguinary, for no other purpose but to commit this crime, in order to fulfil the prophesies of the Old Testament. How much plainer is the justice of God manifested in the fate of a presumptuous spirit who asked to co-operate in the great work, and who, notwithstanding all advice, persisted in the attempt, trusting more in his presumption than in the foresight of him who said to him through his guides, "You will fail." But even then the paternal hand is always held out to the disobedient child to raise him after the fall which has given rise to a salutary humility, which had not yet found room in his heart. O how great is that God who permits his guilty child to discover, even in his own unworthiness, the starting-point which shall lead him towards perfection! Oh how merciful is He who is always ready to pardon a repentant sinner, and who binds up the sores of our guilty hearts with his own benevolent hands, sheds the balm of hope upon them, and heals them with the aid of expiation!

Blessed be thou, my God!

JUDAS ISCARIOT.

After this unexpected manifestation, we said to the spirit of Judas, "We thank you for manifesting yourself to us. You failed by asking for a mission above your strength, but God in his infinite goodness and mercy has permitted you to rise up again; and you have now become one of the humble and devoted servants of Christ. May all learn from this encouraging lesson that however great may have been the sin of the creature, it is never so great as the mercy of God."

The hand of the medium was fluidically controlled, and instantly and spontaneously wrote as follows:—

The love of God is over all his creatures; and you may well have confidence in him. It is not the innocent who need pardon; and it is not the strong who need support. Come, ye children who weep over your faults; the Lord will dry your tears. Come, sick and unhappy children; the Lord will give you a larger share of his love. Come ye, in perfect trust; for we, like you, have fallen; we have mourned over our faults, and by long and painful labour, we have expiated

Digitized by Google

the crimes which we have committed, and the faults to which we yielded during the long series of existences which prepared and accomplished our purification; and the Lord has permitted us to enter into his joy. Imitate us, then, dearly loved brethren; for you have all more or less to expiate, and must all ask for mercy. Come to the feet of your Father in perfect confidence, and confess your faults at his tribunal. The Judge is just and equitable, but he is your Father, and his mercy is always in advance of his justice. His decrees are always within the limit of your strength; he is a mild and patient creditor, and will wait until you are able to pay your debt. O come unto him, and may the hand which we extend towards you uphold you by showing you all the treasures of love which have been granted to us! Even Judas is now a spirit who has been regenerated in the furnace of repentance, remorse, expiation, reincarnation, and progress; and has become one of the humble, active, and devoted auxiliaries of Christ. Let this example show you that you should never repulse any of your brethren; and still less exclude them from the peace of the Lord.

MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN,
With the concurrence of the Apostles.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA; SIMON OF CYRENIA.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 20–30. MARK, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 17–26. LUKE, CHAP. XXII. VERSES 14–23.

The Last Supper.

Matth. xxvi. (20) And when it was evening, he was reclining with the twelve, and while they were eating, he said to them, (21) Verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray me. (22) And they were exceedingly grieved, and each of them began to say to him, Lord, is it I? (23) And he answered and said, He who dippeth his hand with me into the dish, he shall betray me. (24) The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It were well for this man if he had not been born. (25) And Judas who betrayed him answered and said, Rabbi, is it I? And he says to him, Thou hast said. (26) And while they were

Digitized by Google

eating, Jesus took bread and having blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. (27) And taking the cup, he gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, (28) Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins. (29) And I say unto you, Henceforth I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine until I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father. (30) And having sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Mark xiv. (17) And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. (18) And when they were reclining and eating, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you that one of you who is eating with me shall betray me. (19) And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to him one after another, Is it I? and another, Is it I? (20) And he answered and said to them, It is one of the twelve who dippeth with me in the dish. (21) The Son of Man indeed goeth away, as it was written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed? It were well for that man if he had not been born. (22) And while they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, Take, eat, this is my body. (23) And taking the cup, he gave thanks and gave it to them, and they all drank of it. (24) And he said to them, This is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many. (25) Verily I say unto you that I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine until that day when I shall drink it new in the kingdom of God. (26) And when they had sung a hymn, they went forth to the Mount of Olives.

Luke xxii. (14) And when the time was come, he rested, and the twelve Apostles with him. (15) And he said to them, I have desired with longing to eat this passover with you before I suffer. (16) For I say unto you that I will eat of it no more until the time when it shall be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. (17) And he took a cup, and having given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves. (18) For I say unto you that I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come. (19) And taking bread, he gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me. (20) Likewise also the cup after he had drunk, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. (21) But lo, the hand of him who betrayeth me is with me in the dish. (22) And the Son of Man indeed goeth as it was appointed, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed! (23) And they began to inquire among themselves who then it might be of them who was about to do this.

§ 283. The meal which Jesus took with his disciples, and the communion to which he invites all men, ought not to raise any materialistic ideas in your minds. Jesus made a last solemn appeal to universal fraternity, by the emblems of bread and wine, which he compared to his body and to his blood. You are all seated at the same banquet, and should all partake of the same food, and drink of the same cup. The Lord has shown you the place which you ought to fill, and has pointed out the food which should sustain

Digitized by Google

you. Be united during your life, as the eleven faithful disciples gathered round the Master, and be animated by a common sentiment—love for the Father, love for the Saviour, and love for your brethren. You should all share equally in the same sacrifice; and remember that the bread should be the same for all; and that the beverage ought equally to refresh all who are weary, for the Saviour poured it out equally for all.

Act towards your wandering brethren, even the most perverse, as Jesus acted towards Judas. Although he knew that Judas was a false brother and deceitful disciple, Jesus admitted him to the same banquet as the eleven faithful disciples, to share the same food with them, and to drink of the same cup. He thus permitted him to hear his last appeal to universal brotherhood; for Judas was the wandering sheep whom the Good Shepherd would lift on his shoulders afterwards to bring back to the fold. When Jesus was on the cross and about to leave the earth, he had only one word of pardon for Judas who had betrayed him, as well as for his revilers and executioners: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Judas, who had heard the Master's voice, and had not listened to it, was seized with remorse in this world, and driven to suicide; but yet he found pardon after death by sincere and profound repentance, united with the ardent desire for expiation and reparation. After appropriate moral sufferings and tortures, he beheld the path of reincarnation, purification, and progress open before him. He was thus led, like others, through centuries of trials and expiations, by the infinite justice, goodness, and mercy of God, to come forth purified by humility, disinterestedness, and love. He thus regained his place at the banquet with the other disciples, and now joins with them in inviting all his wandering brethren to come, to sit with him at the table of his Master. Try to lead your wandering brethren back to the fold by meeting injury, insult, and treachery, with the gentleness, patience, and silence with which the Master treated Judas, and his revilers, and executioners. Let your

Digitized by Google

hearts and lips, like those of Jesus, feel and express only words of pardon for them; and lead back the most perverse by perseveringly practising love and charity towards them. Do good to your enemies who hate you, and pray for those who persecute you or slander you; and thus develope in them the feelings of what is true, just and good. Prepare them, under the influence of repentance, and the desire of reparation and progress, to come with you one day to take their places at the Feast of the Passover of universal brotherhood.

The bread and wine are merely emblematical, and Jesus never intended to give them a material application; but yet what has been, was to be; for matter is needful for matter. A mere commemoration would have been useless to men, and it was needful to impress them by leading them to regard themselves as tombs in which Christ came to bury himself daily (sepulchres whited externally, and generally very unworthy to serve as altars of propitiation!) But human intelligence is now ready to render to matter the things which belong to matter, and to spirit the things which belong to spirit, and to make the commemoration of the Passover its real end. Routine, blindness and obstinacy have upheld the old error; but it is doomed.

You must understand that it is good for man to devote one day to this great commemoration. It is good that the memory of this great Example who stooped to you should assist in raising you to him from age to age, that the time may rapidly approach when you may meet him in the higher spheres, and still receive from his blessed hand the bread of life and the cup of eternity. It is good that man should thus make a solemn and profound appeal to him who watches unceasingly over your humanity; asking him from the depths of an earnest heart, to give you the bread and wine which you should share with your brethren, by handing them the cup of benediction and giving them their share of the bread of life. Ask him who blessed the bread and wine to bless them once more before handing them to you. It will be well to devote the day of consecration to a yet

Digitized by Google

more solemn and earnest appeal to him who invites you to his table, by prayer, study, good works, and mutual instruction and exhortation. We need not explain every verse, for we have given you the main idea which prevails throughout. The variations in the narratives do not impugn the trustworthiness of the historians, whose accounts complete and explain each other. Every Evangelist has related the conversation which took place during the meal; and Jesus, who repeated the same idea several times to fix it more deeply in the hearts of his disciples, did not always use the same words. Here, especially, you should never lose sight of the fact that Jesus used language appropriate to the intelligence and necessities of the age, in such a manner as to be useful for the present, and preparatory to the future; for the reign of the letter was the means and condition of progress, and was to prepare humanity for the future of the Spirit, the preliminary signs of which are now beginning to shine from the East to the West.

The Passover is an emblem; nothing more. It is the seal which Jesus set upon the teachings of his word; it is the confirmation of the law of love and unity which should prevail among men. It is the culmination of the Master's teaching, and under this symbolic figure of the Passover, it is his last solemn appeal to the practice of the law of love and unity, and thus of universal brotherhood; the only means of human regeneration, and the path of deliverance and freedom which will establish the kingdom of God upon your earth; and thus, according to the ascending law of progress and universal harmony, make it the kingdom of your Father; one of those splendid mansions in his house, which is infinite space, where only pure spirits dwell, and where all is love, unity, liberty and progress.

Jesus descended to his pupils to give them verbal instructions which should make an impression on them, by always connecting his lessons with the narratives and traditions of the Old Testament. He will only return when the seed which he has sown, and which has been growing for so many centuries, shall have shot forth branches laden with

Digitized by Google

fruit. You will then have attained to such a degree of development that he can manifest himself without needing to have recourse to a transitory incarnation like that which he assumed before, when he veiled his spiritual nature by a tangible fluidic body, relatively in harmony with your sphere, to make himself visible to men. All the words of Jesus are allegorical. He will return no more under the same conditions with men, and will only come when they are prepared to come to him. Jesus stooped to you, and now it is your duty to rise to him.

§ 284. You have said, "The bread and wine are only emblematical, and Jesus never intended to give them a material application; but what has been, was to be; for matter requires matter." What do these words mean?

You know that the first disciples of Jesus honoured the Master's last words, and assembled together to take a meal in common, in commemoration of the last meal which they had eaten with him. You have also heard of the scandalous scenes to which these meals led at a later period. Instead of the fraternity which ought to reign among all, pride took its place, and the rich man took his sumptuous repast near the poor man who looked on, to inspire him with envy. The cup was no longer one to touch all lips, nor the beverage one for all hearts. The cup was filled with fine wine and honey for some, while it was filled with gall and vinegar for others. It was needful for Christians to put an end to these abuses, and they instituted the Communion on the basis of bread and wine. It was still a meal, but a meal where the same bread was broken among all the faithful, and the same cup touched all lips. Later still, the difficulty and danger of meeting in numbers compelled the Christians to simplify the fraternal repast; and then they instituted the Communion which was given by the priest to the disciple who presented himself to receive it. It was always the same bread which was broken, and the same wine which was passed round; but at length they came to substitute the host for the bread, which was easier to preserve, and even to hide, when necessary. The priest only

Digitized by Google

was permitted to drink the cup, to avoid the delay and difficulty of providing wine for the Communion of the faithful. These successive alterations took place during the persecutions of the Christians at Rome. You can perceive their object; and the form of the outward act of commemoration is of little consequence when the spiritual act is performed with faith, for the purpose of approaching him who instituted it in thought and heart, with the ardent desire and firm resolve to make earnest and constant efforts to walk in his steps.

Although the Master's words have been taken literally, which has led, notwithstanding his saying, "Do this in remembrance of me," to the human dogma of the Real Presence, and of Transubstantiation, yet this is because man always looks at the bark without thinking of the sap which is its life; and because he always wishes his own idea to prevail, without remembering that it is only a material form which he gives to a spiritual act, and that the form is of little consequence when the spirit is the same.

You, Spiritists, understand the Master's words in spirit and in truth, for we have already told you the meaning of the Passover, and how it should be celebrated. Celebrate it with prayer, not of the lips merely, but of the heart, and let it rest upon the actions of an upright and pure life before the Lord; be humble, active, and devoted towards your brethren in the great human family, and practise good works with sincerity, humility, and charity, according to the law of love, and combine them with study, mutual instruction, and exhortations to good. But you cannot break with all your old ideas by a single effort; and should therefore permit this temporary satisfaction to those Christians or Spiritists who seek for the spirit in the form. Do not break the yoke all at once, for those who have been accustomed to bear it would fly from you in consternation; but leave it to time, reason, love, and charity to open the hearts and intelligence of all, and to spiritualise all men. Thus we now say to all whom the Spirit has not yet entirely released from the letter, that he who believes that he ought to approach

Digitized by Google

the Master by this material act, ought to regard in it only the spiritual act. Men who practise Christian rites, be not ashamed to approach the Holy Table; for whatever may have been the profanations to which it has been exposed, you can always sanctify it by the feeling which brings you to it. Do not regard the priest, or the outward form of the ceremony, but raise your souls to God; look on the virtues practised by the Master, listen to his voice which still preaches to you his sweet morality, and look on the luminous path which he has opened before you, and enlightened for his followers. Whatever the form, look only at the object; whatever the hand which offers you the bread, look only to Jesus, who says, "Do this in remembrance of me."

Spiritists, who still seek for the spirit in the form, and feel comfort in approaching Jesus by a material act of commemoration; remember that he took the meal with his disciples as a symbol of the law of love, unity, and fraternity, amongst all. You may fearlessly perform this material act, the outward form of which conceals the spiritual thought. But unless you are animated by the feelings which are implied in this spiritual repast, abstain from it, for it would be hypocrisy.

Christians of all parties, Greeks, Romans, or Protestants, fulfil this outward act of commemoration, if the need of your heart, or even the habits of your childhood, impel you; but never accomplish it with regard to men or their opinions. Never tamper with your conscience; submit to be blamed unjustly, if needful; but let your actions be pure, and guided by truth and love. Away with that hypocrisy which bows before God for men to behold it! Away with the laxity which pays more attention to the regard of men than to peace of conscience, and is more afraid of the blame of men than the blame of its own conscience!

LUKE, CHAP. XXII.—VERSES 24–30.

Pride, Ambition, and Domination Forbidden.

(24) And there was also rivalry among them, which of them should be thought greater. (25) And he said to them, The kings of the nations

Digitized by Google

lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are called their benefactors. (26) But it shall not be thus among you, but the greater among you shall be as the younger, and the leader as he who serves. (27) For who is greater, he who reclines or the attendant? Is not he who reclines? But I am in the midst of you like an attendant. (28) And you are those who have remained with me in my trials. (29) And I have arranged for you as my Father has appointed me a kingdom. (30) That you shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. And you shall sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

§ 285. No one will be excluded or rejected, but no one ought to think more of himself than of his brethren, or to aspire to a higher place.

(Verse 24.)—The debate which arose among the disciples as to which of them should be the greater resembles the request of the sons of Zebedee and their mother, which excited the indignation of the other Apostles. Jesus replied then by giving them a lesson which is essentially the same as that which he repeated on the present occasion, except that it was differently expressed. Such debates were not unfrequent among the Apostles, who, notwithstanding their mission, were under the dominion of the flesh, and liable to its weaknesses.

(Verses 25–27.)—These verses are explained by what we have already said; but we may repeat that the reply of Jesus is a short and simple lesson urging men to humility, disinterestedness and self-renunciation. Pride and ambition erect a barrier between man and God, like everything which infringes the law of love, charity and fraternity.

(Verses 28–30.)—The expression "trials" is not to be taken literally. According to the spirit which is veiled by the letter, it means, as regards Jesus, trials and tribulations to which any other nature but his own would have succumbed. From a human point of view, the insults and persecutions of his enemies were assuredly tribulations and trials to him. You must remember that Jesus was speaking to his disciples, and in speaking of trials, he designed to strike a blow at the supposed divinity which would afterwards be ascribed to him by men.

(Verses 28, 29.)—The faithful Apostles were advanced

Digitized by Google

spirits, but were not yet perfect. Jesus brought men the means of progress, just as God had granted to Jesus and all other spirits the means of success. And like other spirits who had always persevered in well-doing, Jesus himself had been aided by the superior spirits who were entrusted with his development. Thus, too, the Apostles would be led to attain that perfection to which they aspired, and to obtain which they exerted all their efforts.

Jesus is the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet, and has sole charge of your progress. He is preparing the kingdom for you as well as for the Apostles, and causes you to be aided by relatively superior spirits suited to your development, who guide you to that perfection to which you aspire. Use every effort to succeed, and when you have attained it, we shall all be united as active and devoted servants of the Father, and shall break the spiritual bread, and drink of the cup of eternal life together.

(Verse 30.) For an explanation of this verse, we refer you to what we have already said (vol. ii. pp. 249–251, § 237).

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 31–35. MARK, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 27–31. LUKE, CHAP. XXII. VERSES 31–38.

Predictions of Jesus.

Matth. xxvi. (31) Then Jesus says to them, All of you shall be offended on account of me this night, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered. (32) But after I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. (33) And Peter answered and said to him, Although all should be offended in thee, I will never be offended. (34) And Jesus said to him, Verily I say to thee, that in this night, before the cock shall crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. (35) And Peter saith unto him, And if I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee. And all the disciples said the same.

Mark xiv. (27) And Jesus says to them, You shall all be offended in me this night, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. (28) But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. (29) And Peter said to him, And if all should be offended, yet will not I. (30) And Jesus says to him, Verily I say unto thee that on this very night, before the cock shall crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. (31) But he spoke more vehemently, If I must die with thee, I will not deny thee. And thus said they all.

Luke xxii. (31) And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan has

Digitized by Google

demanded you, to winnow you like wheat. (32) But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren. (33) And he said to him, Lord, I am ready to follow thee to prison and to death. (34) And he said, I tell thee, Peter, that the cock shall not crow this day before thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. (35) And he said to them, When I sent you without purse, and wallet, and sandals, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. (36) Then he said to them, But now let him who has a purse, take it, and in like manner his wallet, and let him who hath no sword, sell his garment, and buy one. (37) For I say to you that this which is written must be accomplished in me, And he was numbered with the transgressors; for also that which is written about me hath an end. (38) And they said, Lord, behold here are two swords. And he said to them, It is enough.

§ 286. Jesus made his disciples understand beforehand how weak is the human will, and how little man ought to rely on his own strength. When he said to Peter, "I have prayed for thee," he showed all that the only support on which man can rely is prayer; but none of them understood him at the time, for not one prepared himself for the storm by prayer, and they all failed at the moment of danger. The incident was a lesson for the future.

Some special explanations are needful.

(Luke xxii. 31.)—Jesus alluded to the influence which the dread of possible future events had upon Peter, and to the evil thoughts which arose in his mind, which sometimes led him to regret the course on which he had entered. These were passing thoughts, and scarcely assumed any tangible shape; but they were visible to the eye of the Master. Peter knew that some great peril was impending over his Master and themselves; and human weakness sometimes led to a vague regret in his mind that he was thus exposed to danger.

(Luke xxii. 35, 36.)—These words were designed to warn the disciples of the events which were about to take place, and that the time was near. The wallet, purse, and sword were designed to show them that they had entered upon their course, and must arm themselves to be ready to meet attacks. You can see that the words of Jesus are still symbolical, for when Peter made use of his weapon, he said, "Put up thy sword into the sheath, for whoever taketh up the sword shall perish by the sword." This proves that Jesus

Digitized by Google

was speaking figuratively to his disciples, who did not understand him immediately.

He said to them, according to the Spirit, "The time is approaching when you must wander over the earth. Travellers, take care not to be found unprovided for your journey; lay aside all human passions, and every idea and thought of material interest; and never seek to make the way to heaven a means of obtaining wordly objects. You know the goal of your journey; take every precaution to provide yourselves with everything indispensable for success. You will be attacked, and must arm yourselves for defence; but the only weapons which you should use are love and charity."

The words of Jesus include a lesson for the future as well as for the present. All who endeavour to follow the steps of the Master, and to imitate his faithful disciples in the apostleship of the new era, are apostles, and must arm themselves like the Apostles of Christ.

(Luke xxii. 37, 38.)—"It is enough." It must be that the material events shall be fulfilled; the swords were only to form the subject of a lesson, and if there was only one, it was enough. As the Apostles did not comprehend the figurative meaning of the words of Jesus, the coming events opened their understanding by one more lesson, which showed them an example of charity, patience, and power, by what passed at the arrest of Jesus, when Peter wounded Malchas, and Jesus healed him.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 36–46. MARK, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 32–42. LUKE, CHAP. XXII. VERSES 39–46.

Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane.

Matth. xxvi. (36) Then Jesus cometh with them into a place called Gethsemane, and saith to the disciples, Sit down here, while I go and pray yonder. (37) And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and troubled. (38) Then he saith to them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; remain here and watch with me. (39) And going forwards a little way, he fell on his face, and prayed and said, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup

Digitized by Google

pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. (40) And he cometh to the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and saith to Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? (41) Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is zealous, but the flesh is weak. (42) Again the second time he went away, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is impossible that this cup should pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. (43) And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping again, for their eyes were weighed down. (44) And he left them, and went away again, and prayed a third time, repeating the same words. (45) Then he cometh to his disciples, and saith to them, Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. (46) Rise up: and let us go; behold he who betrayeth me is at hand.

Mark xiv. (32) And he cometh to a place called Gethsemane, and saith to his disciples, Sit here while I shall pray. (33) And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be amazed and troubled. (34) And he saith to them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death; remain here and watch. (35) And going forward a little way, he fell on the earth, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. (36) And he said, Abba, Father, all powers are thine; let this cup pass from me; but not what I will, but what thou wilt. (37) And he cometh and findeth them sleeping, and saith to Peter, Simon, art thou asleep? couldst thou not watch one hour? (38) Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. (39) And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words, and coming back, he found them sleeping again. (40) For their eyes were weighed down, and they were unable to answer him anything. (41) And he cometh the third time and saith to them, Sleep on now, and take your rest; it is enough; the hour is come, behold the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. (42) Rise up, and let us go; behold, he who betrayeth me is at hand.

Luke xxii. (39) And he came out, and went as he was accustomed to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples also followed him. (40) And when they were come to the place, he said to them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. (41) And he departed from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, and said, (42) Father, if thou wilt, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. (43) And there appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him. (44) And being in agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like clots of blood falling on the ground. (45) And rising up after praying, he came to his disciples, and found them sleeping for sorrow, and he said to them, (46) Why do ye sleep? Rise up and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

§ 287. Jesus descended to teach men to live and die, with regard to the progress of the spirit. All his words and actions were directed to this end. After having taught his disciples how to live, he went to Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives, to teach them to die. Everything took place solely as a lesson and example to men; and you can understand this if you remember what you have been told of the nature and origin of Jesus. You can understand the neces-

Digitized by Google

sity for these events, if you remember that men were still to believe that Jesus had a human origin, like yours. Both the events and words were necessarily appropriate to this belief. All the words and actions of the Master were linked together during his earthly mission, to serve the present, and prepare for the future, and to lead humanity on, in the course of ages, towards the New Revelation.

(Matth. xxvi. 36, 37; Mark xiv. 32–34; Luke xxii. 39.) —Jesus took the same three disciples with him (Peter, James and John) whom he had already taken to witness the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and the appearance of Moses and Elijah, because their physical constitutions were more favourable than those of any of the other Apostles to render them aptly medianimic to the spirit-manifestation which was about to take place; and especially to the appearance of the angel.

Jesus said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." These words were designed to make the three disciples, and subsequently all men, understand that he had a presentiment of what was about to take place, and that he sought for strength in God.

"Remain here," for you must witness whatever may take place. "Watch with me;" for you must relate what you see and hear, and transmit the record to future generations, to be explained and understood according to the human interpretations appropriate to the intelligence and needs of every age; firstly, according to the letter, and then, at the time predicted, according to the Spirit.

(Matth. xxvi. 39–44; Mark xiv. 35–40; Luke xxii. 40–42.)—These words and acts of Jesus were a lesson and example to the Apostles, and to those who should become their disciples, to show them the submission from which they should never depart, even under the greatest sufferings, and the faith and resignation which they should never abandon, however great their trials; as well as the vigilance which they ought constantly to exert over themselves that they may never fail; and the efficacy of that powerful cordial of the soul—prayer.

Digitized by Google

"Watch and pray," said Jesus to the three disciples, "lest you fall into temptation and yield; the spirit, indeéd, is willing, but the flesh is weak." The spirit is quick to imagine either good or evil, but the flesh is weak, and the spirit cannot rule it.

The three disciples were not asleep, as you understand the term. It was a physical, but not a moral sleep; the spirit remained subject to the body, and perceived its sensations. They were in a state of outward torpor which produced all the appearance of sleep, but which yet permitted them to view, as through a veil, the events which were passing around them, and to hear what was spoken. In such a state, the body sleeps, but the spirit, which is not disengaged, perceives with organs which are clogged with matter, and the effects produced on the brain resemble those of a dream.

In the case of Peter, James, and John, this condition was the result of fatigue and watching. Have you not yourselves sometimes passed into a similar state, like that which we have just described?

The three disciples were not asleep; they saw and heard what passed; but when Jesus approached, their eyes were weighed down under magnetic influence, to give occasion for the advice which he desired to give them. Jesus approached them three times, and spoke the same words to fix them more firmly on their minds and memory, for his words were to be related and recorded by the Evangelists, for the instruction of all future generations of men.

(Luke xxii. 43.)—Can those who believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ believe that God had need of support, and that his strength was insufficient in itself? On the other hand, can those who deny spirit-manifestations, and regard Jesus as a man like themselves, and clothed with a robe of flesh like their own, admit that an angel of the Lord appeared to the eyes of the man Jesus, and to the eyes of the three Apostles? Those who deny spirit-manifestations cannot admit this; and must therefore regard Jesus as an impostor, if he related it to the disciples; but if not (for there is no proof that he mentioned it to them), then it was

Digitized by Google

the disciples themselves who invented this manifestation of the angel; and for what purpose should they, at the very moment when they were endeavouring to establish the divinity of one in whom they could not possibly have believed, if we accept the views of these critics?

Those who believe in spirit-manifestations, and who suppose that Jesus was a man like themselves, can admit that all the events recorded of him may have taken place, but would make his birth an entirely human event. But in that case, the revelations made by the angel to Mary and Joseph are false! If Jesus sprung from a human union, the mystery which surrounded his birth would be a lie; and if we admit that this event is false, we should be forced to admit the possibility of the falsity of the whole history. Let the Spiritist reflect on the consequences of this, and consider the disadvantage at which he would be placed towards those who deny spirit-manifestations, and declare the Gospels to be fabulous, only retaining, according to their own caprice, what it suits their incredulity to admit. But the New Revelation sets the Spirit in the place of the letter, and explains the origin and nature of Jesus in spirit and in truth, and the manner of his appearance on the earth.

He is a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, the protector and ruler of your planet, and the greatest essence next to God, as regards your earth; but not the only one who has arrived at an equal elevation in space, and in the hierarchy of worlds and spirits. He was only clothed with a perispritic body, which left him perfect consciousness of his origin, the independence and liberty of his spirit, the full knowledge of his mission and power, and the certainty of the future. Could Jesus, who was always a spirit, require any other support but in the Lord himself; and did not his own devotion raise him above every human weakness? You may therefore admit that Jesus, who was above all human terrors, designed to set men an example of submission under the greatest sufferings, and you will find that men have profited by his example; for you see martyrs going to the torture without even passing through the moral agony of which the disciples spoke with reference to Jesus,

Digitized by Google

and which, though they took it for a reality, was only an appearance and a lesson. You should never forget that Jesus always placed before the eyes of men practical illustrations of the morality which he preached. Whatever envelope men attribute to Jesus, yet let them admire his spirit. Spiritists, be not disunited; and other men, whoever you are, who are not yet prepared to accept the light of the New Revelation, abandon the fragments of the vase, but carefully collect the perfume which it contained; for those who inhale it inhale eternal life.

The appearance of the angel also took place as a lesson and example to men, to demonstrate that God always upholds those who appeal to him with faith and resignation, and sends them the strength which they require. It also teaches them that whatever trials and sufferings may be reserved for them, they will always find the strength they need in the support which they derive from the Lord.

The appearance of the angel became visible to the three disciples by their clairvoyance. It would not have been visible to them all; and this is the reason that Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, who were best fitted to see the vision.

(Luke xxii. 44.)—The bloody sweat was a fluidic effect, medianimically visible to the three disciples, like the vision of the angel. It was emblematic of the blood which Jesus foresaw would be shed in his name. There is nothing extraordinary in this manifestation to those who are initiated in spiritual science, and the history of spirit-manifestations; for these are authentic records of analogous phenomena, which might be repeated in your own days, to the eyes of seeing mediums. These fluidic effects on the part of the spirits, have analogous effects on the part of incarnate spirits who undergo human incarnation like yourselves. These are material phenomena, which your human science has recognised as a pathological condition. Many instances are recorded in your medical annals; and you may specially call to mind the historic narrative of the two young girls called the Stigmatics of the Tyrol.

Digitized by Google

We must again remind you that everything that took place was intended solely as a lesson and example to men. What did Jesus do? Was he praying alone? Was his prayer a prayer of the lips, or of the thought only? No (and this is one remark which even those who deny the events have overlooked); he took with him three of his disciples, and went forward a little, but not out of sight and hearing. He fell on his face, and expressed aloud his thoughts, his sufferings, and his submission. Blind men, do you not yet understand that Jesus, who set you an example how to live, also set you an example how to die, by showing his disciples how man should bow to the will of his Lord, and master his own will, no matter what agonies he may suffer?

"His disciples were asleep." Do you not yet perceive that this "sleep," which permitted them to observe all the words and actions of the Master, was a lesson?

O dearly beloved Master, blessed Model, how sweet have been thy examples, and how strengthening thy word! Who can say that there was a second of thy passage on earth which was not devoted to the instruction of mankind both by word and example! Gentle Master of morality, still teach these ungrateful ones to prostrate themselves before the Lord, and still let fall from thy blessed lips the words of submission and devotion which they should repeat!

Disciples, who follow the Master, and listen to his voice, beware of allowing yourselves to be overcome with sleep, for the time is approaching, and you should always watch and pray to keep yourselves on your guard against your visible and invisible enemies; the vices of humanity, evil advice and temptations, and secret evil influences. Guard yourselves against yourselves by constant watchfulness over your thoughts, words, and actions, and you will then have nothing to fear from others, whether incarnate or errant.

Jesus set an example to men until the last moment. If he had not seemed to the eyes of his disciples to suffer the agonies which man suffers when face to face with death, the gratitude of mankind would not have been the same. Men did not understand then, and do not yet generally under-

Digitized by Google

stand, that his apparent physical sufferings and trials were not the same as yours. Had they supposed so, they would have said (and you yourselves would have said the same, if you had not been enlightened by the New Revelation as to "who is the Son," and the purely spiritual nature of his mission). "It was easy for him to devote himself to torture and death, for his nature rendered him superior to the sufferings which overwhelm us."

But although material sufferings could not touch him, yet he experienced moral sufferings, and regret at foreseeing a future which should be so unproductive to men. He beheld the blood which men would shed in his name; and this blood appeared to the eyes of the disciples, and made them perceive that when a man is moved by trust and love to raise his heart towards the Lord, and to ask for strength to bear his trials, the Lord sends messengers who bring him the hope and consolation which he needs. And did not he who was a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, above and beyond your humanity, fulfil a superior mission for the progress of men, moved solely by love and devotion, amid moral sufferings, when he stooped to you?

(Matth. xxvi. 45, 46; Mark xiv. 41, 42; Luke xxii. 45, 46.)—"It is enough," said Jesus to his disciples. The lesson was given to the Apostles and their followers, that all men might profit by them. "The hour is come; rise, and let us go;" for the outward events must be accomplished.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 47-56. MARK, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 43–52. LUKE, CHAP. XXII. VERSES 47-53.

Arrest of Jesus.

Matth. xxvi. (47) And while he was speaking, behold Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a large crowd with swords and cudgels, from the high priests and elders of the people. (48) And he who betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, he it is, seize upon him. (49) And immediately coming to Jesus, he said, Hail, Rabbi, and kissed him. (50) And Jesus said to him, Comrade, wherefore art thou here? Then they came up to him, and laid their hands on Jesus, and seized him. (51) And behold one of those with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck the servant of

Digitized by Google

the high priest, and cut off his ear. (52) Then Jesus says to him, Return thy sword into its place, for all those who take the sword shall perish by the sword. (53) Thinkest thou that I am not now able to pray to my Father, and he shall send me more than twelve legions of angels? (54) But how should the writings be fulfilled that thus it must be? (55) In that hour, Jesus said to the multitudes, Do you come out with swords and cudgels as against a thief, to take me? I sat with you daily in the Temple, teaching, and you did not seize me. (56) But all this has come to pass that the writings of the prophets should be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

Mark xiv. (43) And immediately, while he was speaking, came Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a large crowd with swords and cudgels, from the chief priests and scribes and elders. (44) And he who betrayed him had given them a signal, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, he it is; seize him, and lead him away securely. (45) And when he came, he went up to him immediately, and said, Rabbi, Rabbi, and kissed him. (46) And they laid their hands upon him, and seized him. (47) And a certain man among the bystanders drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. (48) And Jesus answered and said to them, Are you come out with swords and cudgels, as against a thief, to take me? (49) I was with you daily in the Temple, teaching, and you did not seize me; but it is that the writings may be fulfilled. (50) And they all left him, and fled. (51) And a certain young man followed him, having thrown a linen cloth around his naked body. And the young men seized him, (52) And he left the linen cloth behind, and fled from them naked.

Luke xxii. (47) And while he was speaking, lo, a multitude, and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near to Jesus, and kissed him. (48) And Jesus said to him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss? (49) But those around him seeing what would happen, said to him, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? (50) And a certain one among them struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. (51) And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. (52) Then Jesus said to the high priests and generals of the Temple, and elders who had come against him, Have you come out as against a thief with swords and cudgels? (53) When I was daily with you in the Temple, you did not stretch out your hands upon me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

§ 288. These events belong to history, and need no commentary. Here as elsewhere you must always remember that the four Gospel narratives (comp. John xviii. 1–12) complete and explain each other. By placing the various narratives together, you obtain the following complete account of the events, in the order in which they happened.

Judas came up to Jesus and said, Hail, Rabbi, and kissed him. Jesus answered, Comrade, wherefore art thou come? While he was speaking, those who followed Judas advanced, and Jesus met them saying, "What seek

Digitized by Google

you here?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth;" and Jesus said, "I am he." They recoiled, and fell to the ground; and he asked them again, "What seek ye?" and they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am he; and if you seek me, let these go." Then he addressed Judas, saying, "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Those who were with Jesus, seeing what was about to happen, said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" Then Simon Peter put his hand to his sword, and drew it, and struck one of the servants of the high priest named Malchas, and cut off his right ear; but Jesus said to Peter, "Put up thy sword into its sheath; for all they that take up the sword shall perish by the sword; suffer ye thus far;" and he touched the man's ear, and healed him. He then said, "Think ye not that I could even now pray to my Father, and he would send me immediately more than twelve legions of angels? But shall I not drink the cup which my Father has given me? And how then should the writings be fulfilled, which say that thus it must be?" Then, addressing himself to the party sent by the Jews, to the chief priests, the captains of the Temple, and the elders who had come to take him, he said, "Are you come here armed with swords and clubs to take me as if I were a robber? I was daily with you in the temple, teaching, and sitting among you; but you did not seize me then. But the writings must needs be fulfilled; and this is your hour, and the power of darkness." Then the soldiers and their leaders and the people sent by the Jews, seized Jesus, and led him away; but all this was done that what was written by the prophets should be fulfilled. Then all the disciples of Jesus forsook him and fled, but there was one young man who followed him, clothed only with a linen cloth; and when the soldiers attempted to seize him, he left the cloth, and fled from them naked.

Remember that Jesus seemed to men to be a man like themselves, and that he was to permit them to suppose so; and you will then understand the object of the words which he spoke to Judas and to those who followed him.

Digitized by Google

John wrote under spirit-influence (xviii. 4) that Jesus "knew all that was about to happen to him," because the revelation of the angel to Mary and Joseph had been divulged at the time when John wrote; and the human belief in the "divinity" of Jesus had already taken root in the minds of men.

The circumstances attending the arrest of Jesus, the wound, and healing of Malchas, and the words which Jesus addressed to Judas, Peter, and the followers of Judas, were designed as an example of charity, forbearance, and power. The repulse and fall of those who first advanced to lay hands on Jesus was caused by the fluidic action of the spirits around the Master. There have been instances of such effects in all ages, even in your own, especially when a subjugated man is thrown to the ground by the obsessing spirits. Among a number of men, you will always find some organizations which can be rendered medianimically sensitive; but the superior spirits have no occasion to resort to these methods, and can condense the needful fluids without the aid of animalized fluids drawn from incarnate spirits.

You are told that Jesus touched the ear of Malchas, and healed him. The ear had not been entirely cut off, and had not fallen down; Jesus healed him by checking the flow of blood by magnetic action. Certain magnetic fluids can check the circulation of the blood, direct it, or increase it. This result may be obtained by human as well as spiritual magnetism, when the magnetizer is aided by beneficent spirits. These are facts which will be studied and applied when the period of voluntary ignorance has ceased.*

The words addressed to Peter, "Put up thy sword into its sheath, for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword," were a lesson to the Apostles, their disciples, to those who professed to be, or should become their successors, and generally to all men, at all periods. Jesus thus showed them that they must never defend the moral doctrine personified in himself by violence and material

* Compare Brittan's "Man and his Relations," pp. 258 and 259.—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

weapons, no matter what might be the result of the attacks, or what their assailants might do. The only weapons which should be employed must be always and everywhere purely moral; patience, gentleness, persuasion, love, and charity. Those who have made use of material weapons have misunderstood the lessons, examples, and commands of the Master, and will be punished by the law of retaliation. These words were also a warning to those who should call themselves or make themselves the leaders of the Church of Christ, that they should never make it a kingdom of this world, using material weapons as instruments of human justice, or to defend themselves against attacks from without.

The words of Jesus to the chief priests and elders, "I was sitting with you daily in the Temple teaching, and you did not arrest me; but this is your hour, and the hour of darkness," have no fatalistic character, as regards those to whom they were addressed. On the contrary, they imply the free use of free will, and express the liberty of success which was now permitted them; whereas hitherto their attempts had been frustrated.

Nor was the presence of the young man with the linen cloth without an object. Previous to his incarnation, he had accepted the mission of serving as the instrument of the lesson which would result from his presence. Under the inspiration of his guardian angel, he joined the followers of Jesus, clothed only with a cloth, at the time of the arrest; and the attendants seized him to lead him to the prætor. Everything that took place was accomplished under spirit influence.

The young man who followed Jesus is the emblem of the old law, which carried with it the emblem of death. It was stopped in its course, laid aside its insignia, and found itself as the Lord had made it. You should all, like this young man, leave your linen cloth in the hands of the unbelievers who seek to stay you. Lay aside the insignia of death; you are enveloped in fraud, malice, and vices. It is as a shroud which enwraps you, for you are all dead bodies in the sight of God. Leave this funeral covering in the hands

Digitized by Google

of those who try to stop your advance in the path of moral progress. Appear before the Lord clothed only with a pure heart, such as he has given you; follow Christ on his own way to the Prætorium, and cast aside on the road the vices which have brought him there. It is your crimes, transgressions, and faults which strike and scourge him; it is your breaches of the law of justice, love, and charity which insults him. Follow Jesus by walking in the paths that he mapped out for you during his earthly mission; and you will alleviate the moral sufferings which you caused him during his passage through the world, by showing him the fruit which has sprung from his labours.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 57–68. MARK, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 53–65. LUKE, CHAP. XXII. VERSES 54, 55, 63–71.

Jesus before Caiaphas.

Matth. xxvi. (57) And those who had seized Jesus, led him away to the house of Caiaphas the High Priest, where the scribes and elders were assembled. (58) And Peter followed him at a long distance into the courtyard of the High Priest, and coming in, he sat down among the attendants, to see the end. (59) And the chief priests and elders and the whole Sanhedrim sought for false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death, and found none. (60) And although many false witnesses came forward, they found none. And at last two false witnesses came forward, and said, (61) This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it up within three days. (62) And the High Priest stood up, and said to him, Answerest thou nothing? What do these men witness against thee? (63) And Jesus was silent, and the High Priest answered and said to him, I abjure thee by the Living God to tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God. (64) And Jesus said to him, Thou hast said it. But I say unto you that from henceforward you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. (65) Then the High Priest rent his garments, saying, He has blasphemed: what further need have we of witnesses; lo, now you have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? (66) And they answered and said, He is worthy of death. (67) Then they spat in his face, and cuffed him. (68) And they struck him, saying, Prophesy to us, Christ, who it is that struck you?

Mark xiv. (53) And they led Jesus away to the house of the High Priest, and all the chief priests, elders and scribes were assembled with him. (54) And Peter followed him from a distance to the court of the High Priest, and was sitting with the attendants, and warmed himself in the fire light. (55) And the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrim sought for evidence against Jesus, that they might condemn him to

Digitized by Google

death ; and they found none. (56) For many bore false witness against him, and their evidence did not agree. (57) And certain men stood up, and bore false witness against him, saying, (58) We heard him say, I will destroy this temple, which was made with hands, and within three days, I will build another not made with hands. (59) And neither thus was their testimony alike. (60) And the High Priest rose up in the midst, and questioned Jesus, saying, answerest thou nothing? What do these witness against thee? (61) And he was silent, and answered him nothing. And the High Priest asked him again, and said to him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? (62) And Jesus said, I am ; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. (63) And the Chief Priest rent his robe, saying, What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy ; what does it appear to you. (64) And they all condemned him as deserving of death. (65) And some began to spit upon him, and to cover his face, and to cuff him, and to say to him, Prophesy ; and the attendants slapped him.

Luke xxii. (54) And they took him and led him away, and brought him into the house of the High Priest ; and Peter followed afar off. (55) And they lit a fire in the middle of the court, and sat there together, and Peter sat in the midst of them. (63) And the men who were assembled round Jesus, struck him and beat him. (64) And having blindfolded him, they struck him in the face, and asked him, saying, Prophesy, who it is who struck you. (65) And they said many other things, blaspheming against him. (66) And when it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and scribes assembled together, and led him away to their Sanhedrim, saying, If thou art the Christ tell us. (67) And he said to them, If I tell you you will not believe. (68) And also if I should ask, you would neither answer me nor release me. (69) From henceforth shall the Son of Man be seated on the right hand of the power of God. (70) And they all said, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said to them, You say that I am. (71) And they said, What further need have we of evidence? For we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth.

289. From an historical point of view no explanation is necessary, for the facts are there. From a spiritual standpoint, you know the sense in which the expression "Son of God" is to be understood, when spoken by Jesus, or accepted by him.

"I am he," replied Jesus to the High Priest, "and hereafter you shall see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." These words, as spoken by the Ruler and Protector of your planet, likewise include a veiled allusion to Reincarnation. He spoke of those among the spirits whom he addressed, who should have profited by the regeneration, and should be reincarnated, and living anew on your earth, and should hen behold Jesus coming in all his spiritual glory, as the

Digitized by Google

visible sovereign of his purified creatures on your equally purified planet.

You may readily understand the words spoken by Jesus to the elders of the people, the chief priests, and Scribes. He spoke from a human point of view, and his words signify: Henceforth the actions of the Son of Man and his power and position will be known. Has not this knowledge been diffused and developed by human interpretations, with the progress of time and intelligence, in the first instance under the dominion of the letter, which has prepared the way for the advent of the Spirit? And has not the New Revelation come to confirm his prophecies by teaching you "who is the Son," and by casting its soft pure light upon the pure and noble figure of Jesus? Thus have his prophecies been justified from the day when they were spoken, until your own day; as they will also be in the future; for "hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God."

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI.—VERSES 69–75. MARK, CHAP. XIV.—VERSES 66–72. LUKE, CHAP. XXII. VERSES 56–62.

Peter's Denial.

Matth. xxvi. (69) And Peter was sitting outside in the court, and a girl came up to him, and said, And you were with Jesus of Galilee. (70) And he denied it before them all, saying, I know not what you say. (71) And he went out into the doorway, and another saw him, and said to those who were there, And this man was with Jesus the Nazarene. (72) And he denied again with an oath, I know not the man. (73) And after a little while, the bystanders went up to Peter, and said to him, Certainly you are also one of them, for your speech makes it evident. (74) Then he began to curse and swear, I know not the man. And immediately a cock crew. (75) And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, who said to him, Before a cock shall crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Mark xiv. (66) And Peter was in the courtyard below, and one of the maidservants of the high priest came, (67) And seeing Peter warming himself, looked at him, and said, And you were with Jesus of Nazareth. (68) And he denied, saying, I know not, nor take any notice of what you say. And he went out into the porch, and a cock crew. (69) And the girl seeing him again, began to say to the bystanders, This man is one of them. (70) And he denied again, and

Digitized by Google

after a little, the bystanders said to Peter again, You are certainly one of them, for you are also a Galilean, and your accent is like it. (71) And he began to curse and swear, I know not the man of whom you speak. (72) And the cock crew a second time. And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had spoken to him, Before the cock shall crow twice, you shall deny me thrice. And he thought over it, and wept.

Luke xxii. (56) And a certain girl seeing him sitting in the firelight and looking at him intently, said, This man was with him too. (57) But he denied it, saying, Woman, I know him not. (58) And after a short time, another person saw him, and said, And you are one of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. (59) And about an hour afterwards, some one else confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this man was also with him, for he is a Galilean too. (60) And Peter said, Man, I know not what you say. And immediately after he had spoken, the cock crew. (61) And the Lord turned round and looked at Peter, and Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, who said to him, Before a cock shall crow, thou wilt deny me thrice. (62) And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

§ 290. Peter had calculated on his own strength, and had gone too far. He had not sought the sole support which could sustain him—prayer; and had allowed himself to be misled by self-confidence. Thus, notwithstanding the warning of Jesus, he was not upon his guard. Great was his remorse, for his fall was due to weakness, and not to fault; he was wanting in foresight and distrust of himself, but he was not guilty of premeditated treason, resulting from indifference and selfishness. Such vices cannot be cast aside like an ill-fitting dress; but when Peter went out of the courtyard, he saw his errors, and wished to atone for them. This is the difference between weakness and guilt. It is not easy for a guilty man to reform in the course of the present life; but a weak man may acquire the strength which he lacks. Therefore, your decisions are often hasty, and you sometimes blame him when the Lord excuses, and excuse him when the Lord condemns.

Do not trouble about the trifling variations in the texts but rather pay attention to the facts, which may increase faith, and convince the incredulous.

The differences in the narratives are due to the state of incarnation, which is more or less susceptible to medianimic influence, according to circumstances. Still there is one point which requires explanation.

Digitized by Google

You are told that when the cock crew (Luke, xxii. 61, 62) the Lord turned, and looked at Peter, and Peter remembered what the Lord had said to him, and went out and wept bitterly. Jesus was not near Peter at the moment; but Peter felt a fluidic impression, which reminded him of the words of Jesus, and made him perceive his mild calm figure looking at him with a sad gaze, while he was repaid by ingratitude for the affection he had shown to Peter. At the time of Peter's denial, and the crowing of the cock, Jesus, who did not wish the moment to pass unperceived, turned towards the point where his disciple was. This gave rise to magnetic action at a distance (the same effects occur among yourselves, though in a very inferior degree); and thus Peter beheld Jesus.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 1–10.

Death of Judas.

(1) And when it was morning, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel together against Jesus, that they might put him to death. (2) And having bound him, they led him away, and handed him over to Pontius Pilate the Governor. (3) Then Judas who had betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned, repented, and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, (4) I have sinned, and have betrayed innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? look thou to that. (5) And throwing down the money in the Temple, he departed, and went away and hanged himself. (6) And the chief priests took the money, and said, It is not lawful to put them into the Treasury, for it is the price of blood. (7) And having taken counsel, they bought with them the potter's field, to bury aliens. (8) Wherefore that field was called, The Field of Blood, until this day. (9) Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And I took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him who was valued, who was valued by the sons of Israel. (10) And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

§ 291. These are the facts; but if you compare Acts i. 18 with Matth. xxvi. 7, some explanations are necessary, as the narratives appear to contradict each other.

Judas brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and senators, and when they refused to take them he threw the money down in the Temple, and hanged himself in a field where his body was afterwards found in an advanced stage of decomposition. The chief priests and senators who

Digitized by Google

had picked up the money, heard of this, and it suggested to them the idea of buying this field for the burial of aliens, and they then buried Judas there; for the suicide forfeited the honours of religious burial among the Hebrews.

You are told in Acts that Judas bought the field with the price of his sin, and went and hanged himself there; but this arose from comments which had been made on the events afterwards recorded by Matthew; and from Judas having been buried in that place. Peter shared in this misconception, and Luke derived his statements from him.

It was the custom among the Hebrews to make ready their last resting-place; and it was supposed that Judas had bought the field with the thirty pieces of silver, because his body was found, and buried there.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 11–26. MARK, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 1–15. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII. VERSES 1–25.

Jesus before Pilate.

Matth. xxvii. (11) And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said to him, Thou sayest. (12) And when he was denounced by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. (13) Then Pilate said to him, Dost thou not know how many things they witness against thee? (14) And he answered him not a word, so that the governor was greatly surprised. (15) And after the feast, the governor was accustomed to release to the multitude a prisoner, whom they wished. (16) And they had then a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. (17) Therefore, when they were assembled, Pilate said to them, Whom do you wish me to release to you; Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? (18) For he knew that they had given him up through jealousy. (19) But while he was sitting on the divan, his wife sent to him, saying, Let there be nothing between thee and that just man, for I have suffered many things to-day in a dream on account of him. (20) And the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. (21) And the governor answered and said to them, Which of these two do you wish me to release unto you? And they said, Barabbas. (22) Pilate says to them, What shall I do then with Jesus who is called Christ? They all say, Let him be crucified. (23) And the governor said, Why, what evil has he done? But they cried out exceedingly, saying, Let him be crucified. (24) And when Pilate saw that he could do no good, but rather that he caused a tumult, he took water, and washed his hands in presence of the crowd, saying, I am free from the blood of this just man; see ye to it. (25) And the

Digitized by Google

whole people answered and said, His blood be on us and on our children. (26) Then he released Barabbas unto them, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him over to be crucified.

Mark xv. (1) And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests took counsel with the elders and scribes, and the whole Sanhedrim, and having bound Jesus, they took him away, and delivered him over to Pilate. (2) And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered and said to him, Thou sayest. (3) And the chief priests accused him of many things. (4) And Pilate again asked him, saying, Answerest thou nothing? look how many things they witness against thee. (5) But Jesus answered nothing at all, so that Pilate wondered. (6) And at the feast he released to them one prisoner, whom they desired. (7) And there was a man named Barabbas, bound with his fellow-rebels, who had committed murder in the insurrection. (8) And the multitude cried out, and began to demand that he should do as he had always done for them. (9) And Pilate answered them, saying, Do you wish me to release to you the King of the Jews? (10) For he knew that the chief priests had given him up through jealousy. (11) But the chief priests stirred up the crowd that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. (12) And Pilate again answered, and said to them, What then do you wish me to do with him whom you call the King of the Jews? (13) And they cried out again, Crucify him. (14) And Pilate said to them, Why, what evil has he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. (15) And Pilate wishing to do enough for the multitude, released Barabbas unto them, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him over to be crucified.

Luke xxiii. (1) And the whole multitude of them rose up, and led him away to Pilate. (2) And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this man perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a King. (3) And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered and said to him, Thou sayest. (4) And Pilate said to the chief priests, and to the crowds, I find no fault in this man. (5) But they were more urgent, saying, He stirs up the people, teaching in all Judæa, beginning from Galilee as far as here. (6) And when Pilate heard Galilee mentioned, he asked if the man was a Galilean? (7) And when he knew that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him away to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem in those days. (8) And when Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he was anxious to see him for a long time, having heard many things about him; and he hoped to have seen some sign done by him. (9) And he questioned him in many words, but he answered him nothing. (10) And the chief priests and scribes stood there, violently accusing him. (11) And Herod and his military guard set him at nought and mocked him, casting on him a magnificent robe, and sent him back to Pilate. (12) And Pilate and Herod were friends with one another in that day, for before that they were at enmity between themselves. (13) And Pilate having assembled the chief priests and rulers, and the people, (14) Said to them, You bring me this man as a perverter of the people, and behold, I who have examined him in your presence, find no fault in this man whereof you accuse him. (15) Nor yet Herod, for I sent you to him, and behold he has done nothing worthy of death. (16) I will therefore chastise him and release him. (17) For it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast. (18) But the whole multitude cried out, saying, Away with this man,

Digitized by Google

and release unto us Barabbas. (19) Who for a certain sedition that arose in the city, and for murder, was in prison. (20) Then Pilate, wishing to release Jesus, spoke to them again. (21) But they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. (22) And the third time he said to them, Why, what evil has this man done? I find no fault worthy of death in him, so I will chastise him, and release him. (23) And they insisted with loud voices, desiring that he should be crucified, and their voices and those of the high priests prevailed. (24) And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they desired. (25) And he released to them him who was cast into prison for sedition and murder, as they asked; and he delivered over Jesus to their will.

§ 292. You need not wonder at the differences in the narratives; for each Evangelist had to enter into special details, and while one writer has given a summary of the events, another has related them more fully.

When Jesus was brought before Pilate, he only replied to the single question relative to the sovereignty of the Jews. It was a moral and spiritual sovereignty, which Pilate could not misunderstand; not because he acknowledged the mission of Jesus, but because he perceived that there was nothing of a political character in the life or actions of the man who was brought before him as a criminal. He was moved by a secret impulse to use every effort to save the accused. He was also warned by his wife, who had seen Jesus in her sleep, rising luminous from the cross, and darkness covering the world. He sought to shirk the responsibility which rested on him by sending Jesus to Herod, hoping thus to satisfy both the necessities of his political position, and his conscience too; but Herod was also unwilling to take on himself the consequences of a capital condemnation. He was undecided what to do; and vexed at the want of respect and submission which Jesus shewed for the dignity of a representative of the Cæsars, he inflicted on him a disgraceful punishment, and sent him back to Pilate, who was the proper person to deal with the case. The principal events which took place in the presence of Pilate, and between Pilate and Jesus, are not affected by Jesus being sent to Herod. We will now give you the few special explanations which are necessary.

(Luke xxiii. 7–11.)—Herod was annoyed at the refusal of Jesus to answer any of his questions, and set him at

Digitized by Google

nought, and mocked him. He clothed him in a magnificent robe, like that worn by the Emperors and their heirs apparent, in contempt and mockery; and thus treated Jesus as an ambitious madman. Herod was not within the limits of his own jurisdiction at Jerusalem; and Jesus was subject to the authority of Pilate, before whom the accusation was first brought.

(Luke xxvii. 12.)—Herod and Pilate were reconciled by their interchange of civilities, and deference to each other's authority in reference to the prisoner Jesus.

(Matth. xxvii. 29.)—What Pilate's wife supposed to be a dream, was a spirit-manifestation and warning, which was given her in a condition which she took for sleep, but which was only a magnetico-spiritual heaviness. In human magnetism there are several stages of disengagement of the spirit; and it is the same in spirit-magnetism. It may simply produce lucidity, by incomplete disengagement, or else ecstasy, which only supervenes upon the complete disengagement of the spirit.

The spirits threw Pilate's wife into a state of lucidity which made it easy for her to realize the scenes which they brought before her eyes; and thus they shewed her Jesus stretched luminous on the cross, and darkness covering the world. This spirit-manifestation was given by Pilate's guardian angel, with the permission of God, to remind him that he must choose between justice and truth on the one hand, and pride and avarice on the other; and Pilate was confirmed by what his wife told him in his desire to save Jesus. Pilate was already influenced to save Jesus by a secret conviction of his innocence; but this was opposed by the fear of losing his appointment; and thus he finally yielded. Everything was so arranged by spirit influence that the innocence of Jesus and the iniquity of his condemnation should be more striking both to the men of that age, and to future generations.

(Matth. xxvii. 11; Mark xv. 2; Luke xxiii. 3.)—Pilate asked Jesus if he were the King of the Jews, because the accusation depended chiefly on this point to awaken the

Digitized by Google

fears of the Romans; and the appearance of Jesus was so unlike any such pretensions, that it struck him with astonishment. Jesus replied, "Thou sayest!" that is, in a spiritual point of view. To understand the exact sense of his words, they must not be isolated from what he had already said, "Verily I say unto you that you shall see me no more henceforward until you shall say, Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord." (Luke xix. 38; xiii. 35.)

After this, Pilate twice gave him the title of King of the Jews, in derision (Mark xv. 9, 14), supposing him to be a weak-minded man, who had been led astray by madness rather than by ambition.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 27–30. MARK, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 16–19.

Insults to Jesus.

Matth. xxvii. (27) Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Prætorium, and gathered round him the whole band. (28) And having stripped him, they put on him a scarlet robe. (29) And having plaited a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand, and they knelt before him and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews. (30) And when they had spit upon him, they took the reed, and struck him on the head.

Mark xv. (16) And the soldiers led him into the court which is the Prætorium, and assembled the whole band. (17) And they put on him a purple robe, and having plaited a crown of thorns, they put it on him. (18) And they began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews. (19) And they struck him on the head with a reed, and spit upon him, and bowed their knees, and did homage to him.

§ 293. This is a continued lesson and example to men. You will find in the outrages which Jesus suffered, and in the patience and resignation which he displayed, the line of conduct which you ought to pursue. Never join with those who accuse or insult others, however right it may seem to you; for you may be mistaken, and accuse or injure an innocent man. The human senses are weak, and you are often deceived; and he who appears to you to be guilty, and really is so in the eyes of men, may be just before God. Therefore abstain, for your intelligence is often at fault.

Digitized by Google

If you are exposed to the ridicule and contempt of your brethren, however unjust may be their acts and accusations, always reply to them by patience and meekness. Do not attempt to teach the blind the principles and properties of light, for you would lose your time, but strengthen yourselves in the purity of your intentions, conscience, and actions, and be sure that the Lord will always be a just judge towards you.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 31–32. MARK, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 20–21. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII. VERSES 26–31.

Jesus led to Execution.

Matth. xxvii. (31) And after they had mocked him, they took the robe off him, and put on him his own clothes, and led him away to be crucified. (32) And as they were coming out, they found a man named Simon, who was a Cyrenian; this man they compelled to bear his cross.

Mark xv. (20) And when they had mocked him, they took the purple robe off him, and dressed him in his own clothes; and they led him out to crucify him. (21) And they compel one Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming from the country (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear his cross.

Luke xxiii. (26) And as they led him out, they seized upon a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who came from the country, and placed the cross upon him, to carry behind Jesus. (27) And there followed him a great multitude of people and women, who also beat themselves, and bewailed him. (28) And Jesus turned towards them, and said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children. (29) For behold the days shall come in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs which never bare, and the breasts which never suckled. (30) Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. (31) For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

§ 294. Jesus, after having been mocked and ridiculed by all, was bound and led to execution. Pilate delivered him over to the Jews who desired to put him to death; but the soldiers of the Tetrarch were the guards and executioners of the sentence, and were to watch over the execution until the crucified malefactors had breathed their last.

Jesus walked with pain and difficulty. Was it not necessary to show men how far submission and resignation could go? Not one complaint or reproach escaped his

Digitized by Google

lips; but do not say that he was at ease, for he suffered very much in heart at the time at the hardness of men. He suffered, when he foresaw how many ages must still pass over your heads before the baptism of the Spirit should have purified you. He suffered when he foresaw the sufferings that still awaited his brethren in the future; those brethren whom he loved so ardently that he consented to show them their path by walking in it himself. He suffered anguish like that of a mother who beholds her dearly beloved sons falling into guilty courses, and foresees that the law must fall on and overwhelm them. She has said to them, "Come to me, come to me; repent, and I will obtain your pardon;" but she sees them turn their heads away, and bury themselves deeper and deeper in their guilty courses. This tender mother does not suffer in her flesh, and her bones are not broken; but all the fibres of her heart are violently wrenched, and the punishment hanging over her beloved ones, tortures her. Thus Jesus suffered severely in his love, and still suffers when he sees your obduracy. Appease his sufferings by your love and submission; for this is the only balm which can heal the wounds caused by your ingratitude and crimes.

In the figurative words which Jesus addressed to the women who lamented over his fate, he alluded both to the destruction of Jerusalem, and also to the calamities which are inevitably necessary for the purification and transformation of your planet and its humanity. These future calamities will effect the destruction of the modern Jerusalem of your present world, to rebuild a new city, and an indestructible temple.

(Luke xxiii. 31.)—This was a proverbial expression among the Jews, to express the just and the sinners. If the just suffer thus, how will the sinners be treated? Jesus pronounced these words, which are also figurative, to impress those who should hear or read them, and make them comprehend the fate reserved for the guilty ones who misunderstand the just and sublime morality of which he is the personification.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 33–38. MARK, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 22–28. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII. VERSES 32–34, 38.

Crucifixion of Jesus.

Matth. xxvii. (33) And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which is called the Place of a Skull, (34) They gave him to drink vinegar mixed with gall; and when he had tasted it, he would not drink. (35) And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among them, casting lots, that the word of the prophet might be fulfilled: They divided my clothes among them, and cast lots for my apparel. (36) And they sat down and watched him there. (37) And they placed over his head his accusation written, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. (38) Then they crucified with him two thieves, one on the right hand, and one on the left.

Mark xv. (22) And they took him to a place, Golgotha, which means, when interpreted, Place of a Skull. (23) And they gave him wine mixed with myrrh to drink, but he would not take it. (24) And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes, casting lots on them, whose they should be. (25) And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. (26) And the inscription of his sentence was written above: The King of the Jews. (27) And they crucified two thieves with him, one on his right hand, and the other on his left. (28) And the writing was fulfilled, which said, And he was numbered with the lawless.

Luke xxiii. (32) And two other malefactors were taken to be put to death with him. (33) And when they came to the place called a Skull they crucified him there, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. (34) And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And they divided his clothes, and cast lots. (38) And there was also an inscription written over him in Greek and Roman and Hebrew letters, This is the King of the Jews.

§ 295. You have seen how Jesus was led to execution. He uttered no murmur, but was always calm and dignified; for, up to the last moment, he was to set men an example of moderation in words and actions, submission to the laws, however iniquitous, and respect for their agents, however infamous. But truth must be made manifest even above the cross to which the Just One was fixed. He is the King of the Jews, and the King of the earth, for he was before the heavens. Rather is he the King of the inhabitants of the earth, for his kingdom is not of this world, and cannot give offence in any way to the kings of this evil world.

Jesus was to set an example of mercy and pardon for the revilers and judges who are led astray by ignorance and evil

Digitized by Google

passions; and when he was crucified, he spoke words which were destined to open the paths of moral progress to all humanity: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It was the Jews who crucified Jesus by their will; but the Roman soldiers performed the outward action. When the multitude demanded his execution, Pilate delivered him up to their will by consenting to his death, and the crowd, always greedy for such spectacles, followed him with shouts and insults; but he was in the hands of the Roman soldiers who were charged with the execution of the sentence.

§ 296. According to Mark and Matthew, the Roman soldiers crucified Jesus; and according to Luke, it was the Jews.

We adhere to what we have just said. The Jews condemned Jesus by their moral act, and it was Pontius Pilate who judicially condemned Jesus to death. It was also the Jews who accompanied Jesus to watch over his execution; but the Roman soldiers executed the sentence, as the executioner fulfils the sentence of death pronounced by the judge. The narratives are designed to bring into relief both the moral and material actions. Luke referred to the purely moral act of the Jews, which, in this case especially, was worse than the material act. The Roman soldiers were only passive instruments. Do you accuse the axe which falls on the neck of the innocent, for the unjust sentence which condemns him? Does not the whole responsibility rest on the erring judge or jury, and not on the executioner, or the iron which he uses? Matthew and Mark referred to the outward act.

The narrative of John (xix. 14–18, 23), which should not be isolated from those of the other Evangelists, included both the material and the moral action. The moral, in saying (v. 18) that the Jews crucified Jesus, and the material in saying (v. 23) that the soldiers effected the crucifixion.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 39–43. MARK, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 29–32. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII. VERSES 35–37.

Insults to Jesus on the Cross.

Matth. xxvii. (39) And they who passed by blasphemed him, shaking their heads, and saying, (40) Thou who wouldst destroy the temple and build it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. (41) And likewise also the chief priests mocked him, with the Scribes and elders, and said, (42) He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he is the King of Israel, then let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him. (43) He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will, for he said, I am the Son of God.

Mark xv. (29) And those who passed by blasphemed him, shaking their heads, and saying, Alas for him who would destroy the Temple, and build it in three days! (30) Save thyself, and come down from the cross. (31) And likewise also the chief priests joked with one another, and with the Scribes, and said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. (32) Let Christ, the King of Israel, come down from the cross, that we may see and believe.

Luke xxiii. (35) And the people stood looking on. And the rulers scoffed with them, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if this is the Christ whom God hath chosen. (36) And the soldiers also derided him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, (37) And saying, If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself.

§ 297. These verses still manifest the ingratitude and folly of men, who insult those whom they ought most to revere. They are also a warning and lesson to those who in your unbelieving and mocking days, reject the spiritual revelation, and thus the spiritual mission of Christ, as his earthly mission was rejected.

The chief priests, Scribes, Pharisees, and elders were proud, backward, and guilty spirits; and the people around and the passers by were incapable of understanding the object and necessity of this mission which had been in preparation for long ages, and which was fulfilled, according to the infinite knowledge and wisdom of God, in such a manner as to be useful at the time, and to prepare for the future, to lead your humanity through the Christian era, under the empire of the letter, with the shell of mystery, and the prestige of miracle, to the period of the new era of

Digitized by Google

the Christianity of Christ; and to the advent of the Spirit of Truth, which comes to free the spirit from the letter, and to make known what has remained hidden until your own days.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 44. MARK, CHAP. XV.—VERSE 32. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII. VERSES 39–43.

The Penitent Thief.

Matth. xxvii. (44) And the thieves who were crucified with him reproached him.

Mark xv. (32) And they who were crucified with him reproached him.

Luke xxiii. (39) And one of the crucified malefactors blasphemed against him, saying, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. (40) But the other answered and rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, because thou art in the same condemnation? (41) And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the just reward for our deeds, but this man has done nothing unlawful. (42) And he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. (43) And Jesus said to him, Verily I say to thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

§ 298. These verses are perfectly consistent. The narrative of Luke is necessary to complete the accounts given by the other Evangelists. Both the robbers were wicked and hardened, and joined at first in the insults of the chief priests, and the crowd; and one of them continued to blaspheme Jesus, demanding that he should show his power by a miracle, and save them also. But the other was touched by the gentleness and benevolence of Jesus in replying to the outrages which he endured by praying for the guilty. He perceived that there was something in him which exalted him above humanity; and being near the moment when liberty restores light to the spirit, he obtained some confused idea of the truth. He then implored the aid of one whom he perceived was more powerful in heavenly than in earthly things; and Jesus replied in these encouraging words, "Verily I say to thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

These last words have given rise to many false interpre-

Digitized by Google

tations and controversies, and still continue to do so. They do not mean that a man whose life has been one of crime and violence will be exempted from all expiation or reparation by the mere fact of his repentance, but only that by quitting life at such a moment, he is ready to enter on the path of progress which will lead him rapidly to well-doing. In fact, as regards the spirit, Paradise is not, as you have supposed, a place of escstatic blessedness, without an object, and with no hope of improvement. It is, on the contrary, the entrance to the luminous path which permits the spirit to behold the prize reserved for its labours. It is the comprehension of the future, joined with the ardent desire of attaining it.

It is in this sense that Jesus promised the penitent thief admission into Paradise, where the sufferings caused by remorse for past faults are a joy to the spirit who perceives the progress that he may make. Then Jesus himself would show him, by his good spirits, the road that he must follow, and the happiness which would await him at last.

§ 299. The Catholic Church has based on these words of Jesus her system of reprobation and grace, and indulgence granted to faith, independently of works, and has placed the penitent thief among the blessed from the mere fact of his sincere repentance, which she styles "perfect contrition."

This is a false interpretation of the Master's words, which have been understood literally, and not according to the spirit. We have just told you that the words of Jesus mean, "As soon as I resume my proper station, by returning to my own spiritual nature, you will re-enter spiritual life, and will see clearly both the path which you must follow, and the goal to be attained."

It is true that repentance is one means of attaining to profitable expiation, activity in experiences, and perseverance in the future. Sincere repentance is the removal of a bandage from the eyes of a blindfolded man, and he then perceives the dazzling light before him, and desires to attain it; but it is none the less needful that he should set out on the road. He can see the obstacles better, and overcome

Digitized by Google

them easier, and arrive at the goal more rapidly; but you must never forget that it will be given to each according to his works. Good works blot out evil ones; but the guilty spirit can only advance by reparation.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 45–50. MARK, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 33–37. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII. VERSES 44, 46.

Apparent death of Jesus.

Matth. xxvii. (45) And from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land, until the ninth hour. (46) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (47) And some of those who were standing there heard him, and said, This man calls for Elijah. (48) And immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and having put it on a reed, gave him to drink. (49) And the rest said, Let him be; let us see whether Elijah will come to save him. (50) And Jesus cried out again with a great voice, and yielded up his spirit.

Mark xv. (33) And when it was the sixth hour there was darkness in the whole country until the ninth hour. (34) And at that hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani; which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, wherefore hast thou forsaken me? (35) And some of those who were standing by heard it, and said, Behold, he calls Elijah. (36) And some one ran and filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let him be; we will see if Elijah will come to take him down. (37) And Jesus, having cried with a loud voice, expired.

Luke xxiii. (44) And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole country until the ninth hour. (46) And Jesus, having cried out with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit; and saying these words, he expired.

§ 300. The words of Jesus have been misinterpreted. Could he have been abandoned by the Lord when he had accomplished his mission? When the Divine Model left his tangible perispritic body on the cross, and his spirit regained its liberty, he cried out, "Lord, all is accomplished; here am I." We give you these words exactly, by the Master's orders.

In order to explain the various narratives of the Evangelists, we must explain what actually took place, and relate the facts with historical precision, likewise by the Master's orders.

After speaking to the penitent thief, Jesus uttered a loud

Digitized by Google

cry to attract the attention of the people to his "last moments," on account of the phenomena which were about to take place. The two thieves were moaning; the disciples of Jesus raised their voices in the greatness of their grief; and all these various cries mingled together.

It was amid the tumultous agitation of a crowd animated by such different feelings that Jesus said, "Lord, all is accomplished, here am I;" and the penitent thief cried out in prayer, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani;" that is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Some of those present thought that Jesus had spoken these words; and there was some uncertainty about what Jesus had said, for his words were lost amid the agitation of the crowd. We will explain presently why it was designed to happen thus. Later on, commentaries arose, and the different versions given in the Gospels result from this.

Since you began to study spiritual science, have you not perceived that the best medium, even the most docile and flexible, may be left to himself in certain cases, although in a state of medianimic excitement, so that his own personality is the agent, when he believes himself to be still under influence? In certain cases, the Apostles recorded the events under the impression of their own judgment, while other events were brought before their eyes, as it were, medianimically.

Thus the four Evangelists were left to themselves in those parts of their narratives which related to the different current interpretations of the words attributed to Jesus, and they recorded them under the influence of their own judgment. The narrative which comes nearest to what actually took place is that of John, who was in the midst of the noise and confusion near the cross.

Matthew and Mark adopted the version which attributed to Jesus the words, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani."

According to the groove which was medianimically traced out for the Evangelists, Jesus, under the veil of the letter, was a mysterious and exceptional being, to human eyes, whose nature they could not define, and who participated

Digitized by Google

at the same time both in your humanity, and in divinity. He was a man clothed with a material human body, the Son of God, the brother of his disciples, and the King of the Jews, who had received all power in heaven and on earth.

Matthew and Mark were left to themselves, because it was necessary to permit men to attribute a relative human principle to Jesus. Men have long regarded this phrase as an irrefutable proof that Jesus suffered materially, and was overcome by his sufferings, which might excuse human weakness in the hour of trial. The false interpretation reproduced by Matthew and Luke was also a means of counterbalancing the belief in the divinity of Christ, in the controversies which arose on this subject, and which were needful to prepare the minds of men to receive the present revelation, which teaches you who is the Son. Luke wrote within the limits which were medianimically assigned to him, but was left to his own judgment; and having adopted the opinion of Paul, who regarded Christ as the Mediator between God and man, he gave this version of the words of Jesus: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." John also wrote within his own limits, and his narrative was designed to furnish human interpreters, according to the letter, with the elements of belief in the divinity of Christ; but it also contained expressions designed to counteract this belief at the time of the advent of the Spirit, and to serve as the basis of the New Revelation which should make known the nature and origin of the Son, and the position which he occupies towards God. John, influenced by his own judgment, and according to what he had been able to retain, adopted this version of the words which were spoken, "It is finished."* The versions adopted by Luke and John expressed the same idea as the words literally pronounced by Jesus, which serve as an example both of love and submission. Jesus presented himself before the Lord, and committed himself into his hands, after having accomplished everything.

* John xix. 28, 30.

Digitized by Google

You are told that Jesus yielded up his spirit, or expired. These expressions convey the same idea; the return of the spirit to spirit-life, where it regains its freedom. But there is no comparison between the return of Jesus, and yours. In your case, material human incarnation is an exile for trials and expiations. Life is taken away from you, and when you have left it you cannot resume it again. You can only have a new existence by means of reincarnation, and whatever efforts you may have made during your earthly life, your humanity always leads you into some weakness or failings, even if not into actual faults. When you return to spirit-life, you are always under the burden of judgment, and of a more or less painful repentance, according to your degree of culpability.

But the return of Jesus to spirit-life was wholly different. He has told you so, when alluding to his return, and to the events and circumstances of his earthly mission, both before and after his "death."* He laid down his life to take it up again, and no one did, or could, take it from him; but he laid it down of himself. He had power to lay it down, and he had power to take it up again. Thus he did not undergo material human incarnation like yours, and his absence from his country was not an exile; for very frequently, when his spirit was watching over the affairs of your globe, he was believed to have retired into solitude to pray. He soared above your universe, wisely directing the course of all things, and dispensing the orders of the Sovereign Master. No one took his life from him, but he laid it down of himself, when his spirit resumed its liberty, and left his tangible perispritic body on the Cross. He took it up again, "according to the commandment that he had received from his Father" for his reappearance, which is called his "resurrection," and for the completion of his earthly mission. He laid it down finally of himself, after the completion of his mission, at the period called the Ascension, by abandoning his tangible perispritic

* John x. 47, 48.

Digitized by Google

body, and by restoring the elements of which it was composed to the sources whence they were derived. He was pure from any fault, and suffered no regret or expiation; he, the Just One, returned to his own country as the judge, and not as the accused.

The darkness which covered the earth, and the darkening of the sun, was a powerful physical effect produced by spiritual agency, and was designed to impress the masses strongly, and to produce a great effect on future generations also.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 51–56. MARK, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 38–41. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII. VERSES 45, 47–49.

Earthquake and Prodigies.

Matth. xxvii. (51) And behold the veil of the Temple was rent in two from top to bottom, and the earth was shaken, and the rocks were rent. (52) And the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the holy men at rest were raised. (53) And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. (54) And the centurion and those who were with him, guarding Jesus, seeing the earthquake and the things which happened, feared exceedingly, and said, Truly this was the Son of God. (55) And many women were there, looking on from a distance. They were those who followed Jesus from Galilee, and ministered to him. (56) Among them was Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

Mark xv. (38) And the veil of the Temple was rent in two from above to below. (39) And the centurion, who was standing over against him, seeing how he cried out and expired, said, Truly this man was a Son of God. (40) And there were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were also Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James the Little, and of Joses and Salome. (41) Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him; and many others who went up with him to Jerusalem.

Luke xxiii. (45) And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the Temple was rent in the middle. (47) And the centurion, seeing what took place, glorified God, saying, Of a truth this was a just man. (48) And all the multitudes who assembled to this spectacle, seeing what was done, beat their breasts, and returned. (49) And all who knew him, and the women who followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

§ 301. You will not open the eyes of those who persist in closing them; and you cannot persuade those who deny

Digitized by Google

all ultra-mundane influence to admit spiritual facts. The phenomena which attended the apparent death of Jesus were produced by the spirits around him, who were incalculably numerous.

It was necessary to strike the gross and ignorant masses with consternation, and to appeal to the material senses of those who only recognized matter; and the partial earthquake produced by the combination of fluids, and the vapour which obscured the light of day for a short time, were more effective than the miracles of mercy and charity which Jesus had been working for three years.

The darkening of the sun and the darkness which covered the earth were produced by opaque fluids collected and combined by the action of spirits. The earthquake was a partial phenomenon, affecting that part of the country where the Jews, who had pursued Jesus with hatred and insult were assembled. It extended to the Temple, where the priests and elders had returned after the execution. It was a purely spiritual phenomenon, which was effected by a simple combination of the requisite fluids. Ordinary earthquakes are a planetary crisis in the work of the progressive transformation of your world, and are produced by volcanic shocks, which are more or less violent in proportion to the distance and depth of the agency. But this earthquake was due to other causes, and did not differ, except in power, from those which disturb a room or furniture, and move objects before your eyes. The action was stronger, but the agency was the same. The rending of the rocks was also a physical phenomenon, produced by the same direct, but occult action of the spirits of the Lord, and took place at the same time as the shock which affected the Temple.¶

Let it not be objected that the spirits used means unworthy of their character and elevation, and had recourse to jugglery. We reply beforehand to such criticisms that the Lord has placed in the hands of his servants the means required for the direction of the worlds, and the conversion of men; and these means are employed according to the circumstances and necessities of the period.

Digitized by Google

(Matth. xxvii. 52, 53.)—This narrative reproduces the human idea (with its miraculous character and marvellous circumstances) of visible apparitions of spirits. The ignorance and prejudice of the men of that age were incapable of understanding and explaining the fact, and they believed in a corporeal resurrection by the return of a spirit into its corpse, which it either resumed in its decomposition, or reconstituted from the dust. The Apostles and Evangelists shared in the ignorance and superstition of the masses, in this respect.

The spirits who manifested themselves assumed forms which might be recognized, and make a greater impression on the people. We say assumed, for these manifestations were not produced by elevated spirits, but by good spirits of a relatively inferior order. The elevated spirits whose likeness the others assumed, and who were called, in the figurative language suited to the age, "the holy ones at rest," were the prophets, and those whose austere and just lives had earned public admiration. Thus, when the passage is interpreted in spirit and in truth, it simply signifies, "Spirits made themselves visible to the eyes of men." "They were seen by many"—*i.e.*, by those who were, unknown to themselves, gifted with the faculty of seeing medianimically.

The Centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus witnessed the earthquake and the other phenomena which took place under their eyes at the very moment when Jesus uttered a loud cry. They were seized with terror; and as they supposed that the wrath of God was manifested before their eyes against the iniquity of the execution, they said, "Truly this was a just man; truly this was the Son of God." These two expressions here imply the same idea; and the term Son is not to be understood as descent, though it afterwards gave rise to the human dogma of the divinity of Christ, according to human interpretations, under the empire and veil of the letter.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 57–61. MARK, CHAP. XV.—VERSES 42–47. LUKE, CHAP. XXIII. VERSES 50–56.

Burial of Jesus.

Matth. xxvii. (57) And when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathæa, named Joseph, who himself was a disciple of Jesus also. (58) He came to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded that the body should be given up to him. (59) And taking the body of Jesus, he wrapped it in clean linen. (60) And placed it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and went away. (61) And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting over against the tomb.

Mark xv. (42) And it being now evening, since it was the preparation, which is the eve of the Sabbath, (43) Joseph of Arimathæa came, an honourable counsellor, who also himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. He went in boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. (44) And Pilate wondered that he was already dead, and having summoned the centurion, he asked him if he had been long dead. (45) And when he knew it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. (46) And he bought muslin and took him down and wrapped him in the muslin, and laid him in a tomb which was hewn from the rock, and rolled a stone to the door of the tomb. (47) And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was placed.

Luke xxiii. (50) And behold a man named Joseph, who was a councillor, a good and just man, (51) (Who was not a party to their counsel and action) from Arimathæa, a city of the Jews, who also himself waited for the kingdom of God; (52) This man came to Pilate, and requested the body of Jesus. (53) And took it down, and wrapped it in muslin, and placed it in a hewn tomb, in which no one was laid before. (54) And it was the day of preparation, and the Sabbath was dawning. (55) And certain women, who had come with him from Galilee, followed, and saw the tomb, and how his body was laid. 56) And they returned, and prepared spice and myrrh, and rested on the Sabbath-day, according to the commandment.

§ 302. These facts belong to history, and require no comment. The body of Jesus was laid in the tomb, and the events which followed took their course.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVII.—VERSES 62–66.

The Stone Closing the Door of the Tomb Sealed and Guarded.

(62) Now on the morrow, which is after the preparation, the chief priests and scribes gathered together to Pilate, saying, (63) Lord, we remember that this deceiver said, when he was alive, After three days

Digitized by Google

I shall rise again. (64) Order, therefore, that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples should come by night and steal him, and should say to the people, He is risen from the dead; and the last deceit shall be worse than the first. (65) And Pilate said to them, You have a guard; go and make it as secure as you can. (66) And they went with the guard, and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone.

§ 303. The Jews knew the importance of the words of Jesus, and the secret voice of their conscience made them fear that they might be true. The soldiers appointed to guard the tomb were furnished by the Roman militia. The Jews had no army, and could only employ the military force by the authority of the Tetrarch who governed the province. Pilate's reply (v. 65) means, "The soldiers are at your disposal: I consent."

The chief priests and Pharisees knew that Jesus had said that he would rise again three days after his death. They had the greatest interest in preserving the body as a convincing proof to confound the pretences of the Master's disciples, and to show to the people, in case the disciples sought to spread the report of his resurrection. They would then be able to expose the imposture, having a sure weapon to combat and crush the enemies of their faith. Thus they took precautions to guard the tomb until the Sabbath was past, when they could take needful steps to relieve the authorities of the care of watching the tomb, and could provide for their own interests. They had posted trustworthy spies in sight of the cross.

Joseph of Arimathæa believed that he was acting secretly, but the agents of the priests followed him. Some observed what took place, while others remained on guard in sight of the tomb, to make sure that no one else should enter it; which would, indeed, have been opposed to Hebrew customs, the Sabbath being inviolable, especially for the performance of any act regarded as a pollution, such as the contact of a dead body. The chief priests and Pharisees knew positively when they went to Pilate that the body was in the tomb, and had not been carried away by the disciples or any one else. Then they went to the

Digitized by Google

tomb, escorted by the soldiers whom Pilate had assigned them as a guard, and they satisfied themselves that the body was still there. Having verified the fact, they sealed the stone, and posted the guards. It was because they had verified the presence of the body, and seen it themselves, that when some of the guards related what had passed (Matth. xxvii. 11–13), they bribed the soldiers to say that the disciples came by night, and removed the body while the guard slept, and thus spread the report that it was removed after the tomb had been sealed, and the guard posted. Consequently the body was really in the tomb when they visited it.

Let those prejudiced critics who say that the precautions taken by the Jews were insufficient, and that the disciples had had time to remove the body of Jesus previously, reflect on what they say. Do they really believe that the chief priests and the hostile mob who were present during the last moments of Jesus were so simple as to have taken no precaution to watch, until the feast of the Sabbath was past, and they could relieve the authorities of the care of guarding the tomb, and could protect their own interests? Do they really believe that those who had so great an interest in preventing fraud, would not have ascertained if the body was still in the tomb, before they finally closed and sealed it? This would have been very simple and confiding of these priests, who knew all human trickeries by profession, these proud Pharisees, these learned Scribes!

If they had not followed Joseph of Arimathæa secretly (not in person, but by their spies), to know where and how the body had been disposed of, their request to Pilate would have been another blunder. If the Jews, whose bitter hostility to Jesus pursued him even after death, had neglected to do this, and to keep watch on the tomb, and ascertain that no one had entered since the body was laid there, would it not have been sheer folly for them to ask next day that the tomb should be guarded lest the disciples should steal the body; and to seal the stone, and post the guards, without first satisfying themselves that the body was still there?

Digitized by Google

Would any critic, whose objections imply that the Jews acted thus, be so confident and credulous, to use no stronger expression, as to close a door in such a manner, after the prisoner had escaped, without even verifying the circumstance beforehand? He who would prove too much, often arrives at a result contrary to what he intended.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVIII.—VERSES 1–15. MARK, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 1–11. LUKE, CHAP. XXIV. VERSES 1–12.

Visit of the Women to the Tomb.

Matth. xxviii. (1) And after the Sabbath, as it was dawning on the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to view the tomb. (2) And behold there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. (3) And his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. (4) And from fear of him the keepers shook, and became as dead men. (5) And the angel answered and said to the women, Fear not, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. (6) He is not here, for he is risen, as he said; come and see the place where the Lord lay. (7) And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall you see him; lo, I have told you. (8) And they came out of the sepulchre quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to bring the tidings to his disciples. (9) And as they went to tell the disciples, lo, Jesus met them, saying, Hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and did him homage. (10) Then said Jesus to them, Do not fear; go and tell my brethren that they shall depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me. (11) And while they were going, behold some of the guard came into the city, and told the high priests all that had happened. (12) And being assembled with the elders, and having taken counsel together, they gave as much money as was necessary to the soldiers, saying, (13) Say, His disciples came by night and stole him while we were asleep. (14) And if the governor should hear this, we will persuade him, and make you secure. (15) And they took the money, and did as they were taught, and this saying is reported among the Jews to this day.

Mark xvi. (1) And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices that they might come and anoint him. (2) And very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb at sunrise. (3) And they said among themselves, Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb? (4) And when they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very large. (5) And coming into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right hand, clothed in a white robe, and they were astounded. (6) And he said to them, Be not astounded. You seek Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified; he

Digitized by Google

is risen; he is not here; behold the place where they laid him. (7) But go and tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall you see him, as he said to you. (8) And going out quickly, they fled from the tomb and trembling and amazement seized upon them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. (9) And having risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. (10) And she went and told those who were with him, while they mourned and wept. (11) And when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

Luke xxiv. (1) And on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb early in the morning to bring the spices which they had prepared; and certain persons with them. (2) And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. (3) And when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. (4) And it came to pass that while they were perplexed about this, behold two men stood by them in dazzling garments. (5) And they were frightened, and fell to the ground on their faces, And they said to them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? (6) He is not here, but he is risen; remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee, saying, (7) It is fitting that the Son of Man must be offered up at the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again. (8) And they remembered his words. (9) And turned back from the tomb, and reported all these things to the eleven and to the rest. (10) And it was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told these things to the Apostles. (11) And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. (12) But Peter rose up, and ran to the tomb, and stooped down and saw the linen wrappings lying by themselves, and he departed, wondering to himself at what had happened.

§ 304. Every Evangelist preserved the independence of his nature, under spiritual influence, and therefore the account of events which they had all witnessed varies in form, though the substance is always the same; and on the other hand, what is incomplete or omitted in the narrative of one, is mentioned by the others. Thus when the four narratives are compared and collated, the events are fully narrated, both in the details and as a whole.

The presence of the women at the tomb was expected, and the embalming and perfuming of the body was fixed for sunrise on the first day of the week. (Mark xvi. 1.; Luke xxiii. 55, 56.)

As soon as the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, and Joanna, and the others who were with them, set out very early, when the day had scarcely begun to dawn, and arrived at the tomb at sunrise, bringing the perfumes that they had prepared to

Digitized by Google

embalm the body of Jesus. (Matth. xxviii. 1; Mark xvi. 1, Luke xxiii. 55, 56, and xxiv. 1.)

They said to each other "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" (Mark xvi. 3.)

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, and at the same instant the stone which closed the tomb was unsealed, overthrown, and removed. The guards were so terrified that they became like dead men, and the women (and not the guards, for the women only were seeing and hearing mediums) saw an angel of the Lord (a superior spirit) whose face was shining like lightning, and his garments white as snow. He descended from heaven and sat down on the stone which he had rolled away (Matth. xxviii. 2–4). Thus, according to the narratives of Mark, Luke, and John, which are incomplete, because the details are omitted, "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, looked and saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away." (Mark xvi. 4; Luke xxiv. 2; John xx. 1.)

The angel, addressing the women, said, "Fear not, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, but is risen, as he said to you. Come and see the place where the Lord lay, and hasten to tell his disciples that he has risen. He will go before you into Galilee, and there you shall see him; behold I have told you." (Matth. xxviii. 5–7.) And going into the tomb (with the angel who had just spoken to them) they saw an angel (or spirit) whom they took for a young man, clothed in a white robe, sitting on the right hand, and they were greatly terrified. (Mark xvi. 5.)

Thus, according to the narrative of Luke, which is incomplete on account of the details being omitted, the women entered the tomb after the stone had been rolled away, and suddenly saw before them two angels or spirits, clothed in shining garments, whom, in their surprise and alarm, they took for two men. (Luke xxiv. 3, 4.) When they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus, which caused them great consternation, and as they looked on the ground, the two angels (or spirits) said to them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen;

Digitized by Google

remember what he said to you while he was in Galilee, It is necessary for the Son of Man to be delivered into the hands of sinners, to be crucified, and to rise again on the third day." They then recollected the words of Jesus (Luke xxiv. 3–8), and the angel, who was sitting on the right hand, guarding the tomb, said to them, "Fear not; you seek Jesus; he is arisen; he is not here; see the place where they laid him; but go and tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you into Galilee, and there shall you see him, as he said to you." (Mark xvi. 6, 7). They immediately left the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and fled from it trembling, and their alarm was so great that they said nothing to anyone, but ran to announce these things to the eleven disciples, and to all the others. (Matth. xxviii. 8; Mark xvi. 8; Luke xxiv. 9).

They who brought this report to the disciples were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and those who were with them (Luke xxiv. 10). They separated, and went different ways to tell their story. Mary Magdalene then ran to Simon Peter, and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them (for she still doubted), "They have taken away the Lord from the tomb, and we know not where they havelaid him." Peter and the other disciple went out immediately, and they both ran to the sepulchre, but the other disciple outran Peter, and arrived there first, and, stooping down, he saw the linen clothes on the ground, but he did not go in. Simon Peter, who followed him, then arrived, and entered the tomb. He saw the linen clothes there, and the cloth which had been about the head, which was not with the clothes, but folded, and laid aside separately. Then the other disciple, who had arrived first at the sepulchre, entered, and he saw and believed; and the disciples then returned home. (John xx. 2–10.)

Thus, according to the narrative of Luke, although what Mary Magdalene had told them appeared to them both to be an idle tale, and they did not believe it, Peter rose up and ran to the tomb, and stooping down (as John, who arrived there before him had done) to look in before entering,

Digitized by Google

he only saw the linen clothes on the ground, and he returned (after going into the sepulchre), wondering in himself at what had happened. (Luke xxiv. 12.)

But Mary Magdalene (who had returned to the tomb with Peter and John) remained outside, weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down to look into the tomb, and saw two angels clothed in white, sitting in the place where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" and she answered, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." After thus speaking, she turned back, and saw Jesus close by, but without knowing that it was Jesus; and he then said, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom dost thou seek?" She thought it was the gardener, and answered, "Sir, if you have buried him, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said, "Mary," and she immediately turned to him, and said, "Rabboni," that is, "My Master." Jesus responded, "Do not touch me, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to find my brethren, and tell them from me, I ascend to my Father and to your Father; to my God, and to your God." Thus, according to the narrative of Mark, Jesus having arisen early in the morning of the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. (Mark xvi. 9.)

Mary Magdalene parted from the other women to run to Peter and John, to relate the appearance of Jesus to those who were then in mourning and sorrow (Mark xvi. 10); but she afterwards rejoined them; and then Jesus appeared to them, saying, "Hail," and they approached and embraced his feet, and did homage to him. Then Jesus said "Fear not, but go and tell my brethren to go into Galilee, and they shall see me there" (Matth. xxviii. 9, 10).

While they were going, some of the guard came into the city, and related to the chief priests all that had happened. The latter then consulted with the elders, and gave the soldiers a large sum of money, saying, "Say that his dis-

Digitized by Google

ciples came by night and stole him while you slept; and if the governor should hear of this, we will persuade him and secure you." The soldiers took the money, and reported what they were told; and this report is still current among the Jews. (Matth. xxviii. 11–15.)

When the women came to the disciples, Mary Magdalene related the two appearances of Jesus, and all that they had seen and heard. It is because she alone related the events that she alone is mentioned in the narratives of Mark and John, which are incomplete on account of the details being omitted. Thus Mary Magdalene came to tell the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and what he had said (John xx. 18); and she went to relate the story to those who had been with him, and who were in mourning and sorrow; but when they heard that he was alive, and that she had seen him, they did not believe her.

Such is the complete narrative, when the events related separately by each of the Evangelists have been placed in order.

The great earthquake was a motion imparted to the locality where the women and the guards were; and their terror, and ignorance of fluidic phenomena led them to ascribe it to an earthquake. This manifestation, which may seem puerile to sceptics, was designed to strike the guards of the tomb with consternation, and to give more effect to the prodigy in their eyes, when they saw that the approaching women shared their terror. It also rendered the narrative which they gave to the high priests, and which was subsequently recorded by the Evangelists, more impressive. The shock took place simultaneously with the removal of the stone, and these phenomena were effected by spirits in obedience to the will of the angel, or superior spirit. The shaking of the ground, and the unsealing and removal of the stone, by the attractive force of the necesssry fluids, will be no more surprising to those who are aware of the effects which the spirits of the Lord can produce, than the opening of Peter's prison doors, and the falling off of his chains.*

* Acts v. 18, 19, 21, 23; xii. 3-10.

Digitized by Google

As for those who deny these events, their time will come, and the light will shine upon them; but we are not yet sent to them. You must not try to make a prejudiced man abandon his opinions by violence, but must wait till he opens his eyes to the light of his own free will, with the aid of time and reincarnation. We are sent to willing labourers, and we refresh the thirsty lands, however dry and hard; but we leave it to time to pulverise those rocks which are so hard as to resist our efforts at present. It is our mission to prepare the scattered materials and to collect and arrange them for him who shall be the architect of the Temple of the Future, who will lay the solid foundations of your beliefs. Do not try to penetrate the meaning of our words; they will be understood in due time; but we shall say no more now. As yet you are only unskilled workmen, but still you are useful for the work of the future. Do not let yourselves be discouraged, for your efforts will be repulsed, and received with sarcasm and ridicule; but press onwards, and offer a refuge to those who have been torn from their opinions, and know not where to seek for hope and consolation. Hold out to them the torch whose feeble ray may aid them to advance towards the light which shall leave no shade behind it.

The appearance of angels or spirits to the women, and afterwards to Mary Magdalene alone, were simply visible and audible appearances; for the women were seeing and hearing mediums, and received what was communicated to them by the spirits.

You need not be surprised at the repetitions of the angels in insisting on what had been said to the women, both before and after they entered the tomb. The suddenness and strangeness of the phenomena had thrown them into great consternation and profound trouble. They were simple, ignorant, unaffected, and loving, and their minds were filled with conflicting emotions. Was it not needful to reassure them, console them, and fix in their memory all that they were to report to the disciples? Did they not leave the tomb with fear and great joy, as soon as they had

Digitized by Google

heard the words of the two angels, and fly from it in such fear and trembling that they said nothing to anyone, so great was their terror?

The first appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene was a simply visible apparition; audible, but intangible. Mary did not recognise Jesus, because he did not at first appear to her under the figure in which she had previously beheld him, and he addressed her in a voice which she did not know. Then Jesus resumed the same voice that Mary had often heard, which arrested her attention, and caused her to turn towards him a second time; and then Jesus showed her the figure of the Master. At that time, he forbade her to touch him, for she would have clasped emptiness, the apparition being impalpable to man. These are phenomena which have taken place in all ages, according to the course of the laws of nature; and there is nothing surprising about them. Those who are initiated in spiritual science know that even the inferior spirits can make themselves visible to seeing and hearing mediums; and Mary Magdalene was gifted with both faculties.

Jesus acted thus when he first appeared to Mary, and availed himself of her trouble and surprise, to prepare her to recognise him, and to fix the impression of his appearance, and the memory of the words which she was to report upon her mind. This first appearance prepared the way for the second appearance to her and to the other women. This was a visible, tangible, and audible apparition. Jesus presented himself before them, visible, and tangible, as they had known him, and clothed in a similar manner. Just as the appearances of stone, hail, snow, rain, and other similar substances materially resemble the objects which they represent to the eyes of the medium, so, when a spirit makes himself tangible under material conditions, he assumes a clothed appearance, needful to establish his identity, and gives it the appearance and consistency of matter itself, as he does to his body. It is not more difficult to combine the fluids which assume the form and colour of human fabrics than to combine those which constitute the body. It is not

Digitized by Google

a preconceived idea of the medium, but the knowledge of an object which he not only remembers but believes to be a reality, when he has medianimically seen or heard anything, if he should be ignorant of his faculties.

Spiritual science explains all the phenomena of the apparitions produced by Jesus at the time of his successive appearances. Cannot even the inferior spirits produce the like? Do you suppose that the Christ could not have produced them by means of the fluidic body, which he reassumed for his reappearance or "resurrection," and which he could render tangible or intangible at pleasure?

We call your attention to the words of Jesus when he first appeared to Mary Magdalene, and upon his second appearance to her and the other women. They expressly exclude the divinity which men have attributed to him, while they correspond with all the other words which he pronounced under the veil of the letter, respecting his origin; the powers which he derived from his Father and your Father; from *his* God and your God; and the place whence he descended among men, and to which he must return. Under the veil of the letter, they contain one of the elements designed to form the basis of the New Revelation, which is now sent to teach you "who is the Son."

"I have not yet ascended to my Father," said Jesus to Mary Magdalene.

"I am still among men," risen again, "and living."

"Go and tell my brethren from me, I ascend to my Father and your Father; my God and your God; tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and they shall see me there."

He calls his disciples his brethren, and thus proclaims that he is not the Uncreated Creator, but a creature; sprung from the same Father and the same God as the disciples, and all men, having had the same origin, at his creation as a spiritual essence.* He prepared his disciples for the event of his "ascension," and indicated the place where he who was the Son of God by his perfect purity; he who is above

* Compare what was said, vol. i. §§ 35-60, pp. 104-146, on the genealogy of Jesus, and on the origin of the spirit.

Digitized by Google

all, and descended from heaven should ascend again to heaven.

Meditate on the visit of the women to the tomb, and on the apparitions of angels, or superior spirits, to them, and the words spoken both before and after their entering the tomb. Reflect on the renewed appearance of angels to Mary Magdalene, who was weeping outside the tomb; on the words spoken to her, the appearances of Jesus to her and the other women, and upon his spoken words. Let all reflect upon them, when they perceive the moment of death approaching, which still appears so cruel to man. Let these thoughts make it easy for you to resign to the earth the body which must return to it; you will find your tomb opened to give passage to your spirit, which rises radiant towards heaven, its true country; heaven, which is the boundless space around you, where you will find renewed and endless activity, life, and love.

And you who visit the tombs to shed over your dead ones the perfume of the soul which flows from your eyes, O weep no more, but look before you, and you will behold a radiant angel guarding the entrance to the tomb; and if you listen attentively, you will hear a friendly voice saying, "Do not weep; him whom you seek is not here; he is gone before you, and you will soon go to regain him, and he will soon reappear to your eyes." O believe, believe and hope, all you who are oppressed with grief; you who love those who are dear to you, believe and press onwards with confidence, for you will soon see them again.

The facts relative to the guards entering the city, and reporting the events to the chief priests, and the decision arrived at by the priests and elders in council, are historically true, and tend to confirm the reality of the violent shaking of the ground, the unsealing and overturning of the stone, and the disappearance of the body from the tomb after the stone had been rolled away. The report of the guards to the priests was as follows:—"You and the Pharisees sealed the stone, after satisfying yourselves that the body was still there; the ground shook; the stone was

Digitized by Google

unsealed, overturned, and rolled away by invisible hands; and when the tomb was thus opened, the body was no longer there; the linen clothes were on the ground, and the napkin which had been tied round the head of Jesus was folded separately."

The soldiers regarded these events as miraculous,* for the unsealing and removal of the stone took place without any human agency, and the body, which resembled a human body like yours, could not have disappeared if it had been still there at the time when the stone was sealed by the chief priests and Pharisees. The tomb was not like a modern tomb, but was merely an excavation hewn out of the solid rock, where the body was laid on a stone, according to the Hebrew custom of interring bodies in such an excavation, either natural or artificial.

If the chief priests and elders had not been persuaded of the truth of the report, would they not have accused the soldiers of treachery, instead of offering them a sum of money to keep silence? But they were overcome with terror; and those who had not hesitated (as they believed) to shed the "blood" of the Just One, dared not accuse the soldiers. They knew that if they threw any responsibility on the soldiers they would only give the events themselves greater publicity, and they preferred to hush up this most serious affair, since the events justified the prophetic words of Jesus, and confirmed his mission. Pilate had no interest in the matter, and made no further inquiries. The soldiers were not bribed to make their story publicly known, but only to explain any reports of the Resurrection which might be spread about, by saying, "His disciples came and stole the body by night while we slept." But this story was less than an imposture, for it is refuted by its very absurdity, as we will show you presently.

As regards the incredulity of the disciples, there were such material difficulties in the way of the escape of Jesus

* Would you not still consider them so yourselves, without the New Revelation?

Digitized by Google

from the tomb that they could not believe it, for they only understood the Resurrection as the return of the spirit into a material human body like your own. When they heard the reports of Mary Magdalene and the other women, they supposed that it was a dream; nor did they believe when Mary Magdalene told them that Jesus was still alive, and that she had seen him.

John went to the tomb with Peter, and when he saw the empty tomb, the linen clothes lying on the ground, and the napkin which had been tied over the head of Jesus, folded separately, he believed. Peter, who had seen as much as John, "returned, wondering in himself what had happened," and trying to find some explanation of these inexplicable events. The other disciples, who had seen nothing, and put no faith in the story of the women, remained incredulous.

The New Revelation gives you the explanation of the Resurrection of Christ, which has hitherto remained incomprehensible to mankind. The Spirit enlightens the darkness of the letter, and shows all the events recorded in the Gospel in luminous harmony, from the moment when the angel announced the appearance of Jesus on your earth to Mary and Joseph, till the close of his earthly mission at the time called the "Ascension," when he finally withdrew from the eyes of men. The presence of Jesus among you was a spiritual apparition as regards yourselves; for his body was constructed on fluidic principles, entirely apart from your organisation, but in harmony with his spiritual nature, and also relatively in harmony with your sphere, that it might exist sufficiently long for the completion of his earthly mission. The perispritic body which Jesus left on the cross, and which Joseph of Arimathæa laid in the tomb, remained there until the stone had been sealed by the chief priests and Pharisees in the presence of the Roman soldiers who were appointed to guard the tomb, and who aided in the work. After this, the presence of the body in the tomb was no longer necessary, and Jesus caused it to lose its tangibility, but retained its constituent elements ready to reunite at will, as had frequently happened before, when he was

Digitized by Google

supposed to have retired into solitude to pray; whereas, in truth, his spirit was soaring above your universe, directing all things, and dispensing the orders of the Sovereign Master. Thus the body of Jesus (not a material human body like yours, but a fluidic perispritic body) disappeared from the tomb cut in the rock; but if the stone had been unsealed before the third day for the chief priests and Pharisees to see if the body was still there, Jesus would have caused it to reappear. He had left it on the cross, bearing every appearance of actual death, and had withdrawn it from the tomb into the fluidic state. But if needful, he would have restored it to the tomb under the same appearance which it presented when Joseph of Arimathæa laid it there, and when the stone was first sealed.

Reflecting men do not regard Revelation as a system by which others try to impose on their credulity, but as a light held up before the human mind. This Revelation will meet with much opposition at first; but the more men study the question seriously, and understand its necessity, the more they will perceive that no other explanation is conceivable.

If you suppose that Jesus was clothed with a material human body, and suffered real death, the Resurrection becomes wholly incredible, whether regarded as corporeal, by the return of the spirit to a human corpse, or simply as the appearance of a spirit which has irrevocably quitted its earthly perishable body by death. It was needful for the Apostles to believe in a corporeal resurrection, for it was the only resurrection which they could understand; besides, it was possible in their eyes, according to the intelligence, prejudice, and traditions of the age. Jesus appeared to them to be clothed with a body like their own, and his death had been real; the corpse was laid in the tomb by Joseph of Arimathæa, and the stone which closed it was sealed by the chief priests and Pharisees, and placed under the guard of Roman soldiers. On the morning of the third day, the stone was unsealed and overturned, and the body was then no longer in the tomb. How could it have disappeared? How could Jesus, who appeared to them

Digitized by Google

to be clothed in a material human body like their own, even if resuscitated, escape from the sealed tomb hewn in the rock?

The problem was incomprehensible, and they were therefore incredulous, but it was necessary that their incredulity should be overcome, or how could they have been Apostles? How could the Apostleship of Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, have taken place? And what would have resulted from the earthly mission of the Master, the Messenger from Heaven?

Jesus gave them all the proofs which were necessary to convince them. These facts were useful at a time when the belief in a corporeal resurrection could alone be understood and accepted; but it was left to the future to explain the events more fully, and the imperfect light shining through the veil of the letter has prepared humanity for the brightness of the present Revelation.

The disciples still remained incredulous, and regarded the narrative of the women as a dream, and did not believe that Jesus was alive and risen again; but were nevertheless impressed by the report. The appearance of Jesus to Peter, and then to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and the report of what he had said, staggered their incredulity; but they did not yet believe. Jesus appeared several times to themselves, and they were finally convinced by the evidence which he offered them, and which Luke and John have recorded in their Gospels. As the disciples were ignorant of the nature of the body of Jesus they believed in a corporeal resurrection. The event was thus above reason, and everything which appeared impossible to them was regarded as a miracle, which they no longer endeavoured either to understand or to explain. They were finally convinced of the truth of the Resurrection when they saw Jesus rise up to heaven at the time of the Ascension.

All that took place was necessary to enable the mission of Jesus to bear its fruits in the present and in the future. The belief of the Apostles was also necessary, for men were then given what they and future generations were able to

Digitized by Google

bear, until the advent of the new era. This belief of the Apostles was useful to serve as the foundation of all the controversies which followed; and which, although they now give rise only to blind faith or incredulity, have prepared the minds of men to receive the New Revelation. The resurrection of Jesus was supposed to be corporeal, by the return of the spirit of Jesus to a dead body. This opinion was transitory, like all other human interpretations; but it has borne its fruits. At present, the progress which you have attained makes this opinion a palpable error. It is wholly inadmissible, for it is both contrary to the laws of nature, and to all the facts recorded in the Gospels; which, when illuminated by the light of spiritual science, serve as the basis of the New Revelation, which explains the nature of the Resurrection of Jesus, which took place by means of a body formed, independently of any human agency, by the application and appropriation of other laws of nature than those which govern your planet.

Natural laws are as immutable as the will of God, who has established them from all eternity, and never departs from them. According to these laws, when the spirit has left the material human body, which constitutes its life to human eyes, by real death, the body becomes a corpse, and irrevocably belongs to the earth; and the spirit cannot live a bodily life again, except by reincarnation. Thus, if Jesus had been clothed in a human body like yours, it would have been impossible for him to have "risen again;" or reappeared again, living a corporeal life in a body which had become a corpse by real death. It would also have been impossible for this body, whether dead or alive, to have disappeared from the tomb while the stone which closed it was sealed. And with such a body, it would have been impossible for Jesus to have disappeared from the eyes of the two disciples who were going to Emmaus, while he was at table with them; and it would have been equally impossible for him to have penetrated into the midst of his disciples while the door of the room where they were assembled was closed from fear of the Jews.

Digitized by Google

If Jesus had been clothed in such a body, how could he have passed through the midst of the enraged Jews, who had dragged him to the precipice on which the city of Nazareth was built, to cast him down? Or how could he have escaped from the Jews who were assembled round him in the Temple in the court of Solomon, and who were about to stone him? But all this, which would have been impossible with an earthly body like yours, was both possible and natural with a fluidic body, which Jesus could render visible or invisible and tangible or intangible at will. The nature of the body of Jesus, which is now revealed to you, explains everything according to spiritual science. It explains what took place on the mountain of Nazareth, what happened in the Temple in the Court of Solomon; the phenomena attending the Resurrection; the disappearance of the body from the tomb and the various subsequent appearances of Jesus.

If the Resurrection is regarded simply as the appearance of a spirit which had left a material human body like yours by actual death, the supposition is equally untenable. According to this view, the body of Jesus was of the same nature as yours; and was in the state of a corpse. Had such been the case it would have been impossible for it to have disappeared from the sealed tomb. But it was no longer there when the stone was unsealed and rolled away. It had disappeared; and the mere fact of its disappearance shows the impossibility of such a theory.

Had the corpse been in the tomb when the stone was unsealed and rolled away it would certainly have remained in the power of the Roman soldiers and the chief priests, and would have been shown to the people, the Apostles, and the disciples who had been imposed upon by the successive apparitions, and who were proclaiming the resurrection of the Master. All would then have regarded Jesus as an imposter who had promised to rise again, and had not done so. What would have been the fate of the Apostles? Would they have persisted in maintaining the reality of the Resurrection of their Master with their last breath, in the midst

Digitized by Google

of tortures? And what would have resulted from the earthly mission of Jesus?

Had the body of Jesus been of the same nature as yours, it must either have remained in the hands of the Roman soldiers and the chief priests, or have been conveyed away. But the supposition of the body having been carried away contradicts all the events related or implied in the Gospels concerning the presence of the body in the tomb when the stone was sealed; its subsequent disappearance; and the so-called Resurrection.

The body could not have been taken away. It is absurd to suppose that the disciples could have removed it, and why should the chief priests, Pharisees, and elders have done so?

If the disciples, or any others had removed the body, they could only have done so either after Joseph of Arimathæa laid it in the tomb, and before the stone was sealed; or afterwards. We have already shown that the body could not have been removed after it was laid in the tomb, and before the sealing of the stone. Again, it would have been impossible to have carried off the body in defiance of the soldiers who were appointed to guard the tomb, and of the sentinel who was always on the watch; and the idea of its having been removed while all the soldiers were asleep, is not only impossible, but absurd.

Could it have been removed by connivance with the soldiers? But their military duty, honour, and responsibility would have set an insuperable obstacle in the way of such a grievous dereliction from their duty on the part of the Roman soldiers. And how could the disciples, who were poor fishermen, without refuge or necessaries for themselves, bribe the Roman soldiers, and calculate on their discretion and participation when, if they could have been corrupted, they might have obtained a very large reward from the chief priests, elders, and Pharisees, if they could have proved that the body of Jesus was carried off by human hands?

Would not the disciples who looked for a corporeal resurrection, have made themselves the authors or accomplices of an imposture if they had falsely asserted the reality

Digitized by Google

of the Resurrection, and of all the circumstantial details connected with it? Would they have maintained their faith to the last gasp, and in the midst of tortures, when it was based upon a lie, if they had themselves carried off the corpse and buried it secretly?

At whatever time, and in whatever manner, you suppose the disciples to have removed the body, the idea of their doing so refutes itself by its very absurdity.

Again, would the disciples have run the serious risk of attempting to corrupt the soldiers with money, when they had no motive or interest in doing so? Had the soldiers been capable of corruption, they would have taken the money, and then obtained another and larger reward by asserting that the body of Jesus had been removed by human hands, and even by following, watching, and delivering over the authors of the theft to the chief priests, Pharisees, and elders?

Had the body been removed by the chief priests and Pharisees, they would have done so, not to destroy it, but to confound the pretentions of the disciples and their Master; for it would have been more to their interest to preserve it as a convincing piece of evidence. They might have removed the body to prevent the disciples from taking it away; but only with the object of showing it to the people afterwards; for all men regarded the body of Jesus as an earthly body like yours. They would have shown it, if the disciples had sought to spread the report of the resurrection, to unmask the imposture, and as a sure weapon against the enemies of their faith. Did they pursue the disciples as the propagators of error among the people, and convict them of a lie? No; they bribed the soldiers to throw the blame of the disappearance of the body upon them; but did they even persecute the disciples on the charge of having violated the tomb? They did not; but it was certainly neither indulgence nor magnanimity which stayed the hands of the judges in Israel, but terror; for they were fully convinced that the body could not have been removed; and yet it had disappeared!

Digitized by Google

The entire series of these events is brought into perfect harmony when the truth is revealed. The New Revelation leaves no further problem to be solved in regard to this, and the suggestion that the body of Jesus was an earthly body, like yours, and that the angels or superior spirits might have rendered it invisible, and carried it away at the moment when the stone was unsealed, would be *à priori* untenable, on account of the revelation which the angel gave to Mary and Joseph; for this revelation would then be false, and could not have emanated from a messenger of God. But this Revelation should not be rejected, but explained in accordance with the laws of Nature, and according to the Spirit which giveth life instead of the letter which killeth.

MARK, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 12–13. LUKE, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 13–35.

Appearance of Jesus to the two Disciples.

Mark xvi. (12) After these things he appeared to two of them as they were walking, in another form, as they were going into the country. (13) And these went and related it to the others; neither did they believe them.

Luke xxiv. (13) And behold two of them were going on the same day to a village called Emmaus about a hundred and sixty stadia from Jerusalem. (14) And they conversed together about all these things which had happened. (15) And it came to pass that as they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself also drew near, and walked with them. (16) But their eyes were holden, that they should not recognize him. (17) And he said to them, What are these words which you exchange with each other as you walk, and are sad? (18) And one of them who was named Cleophas answered, and said to him, Dost thou dwell alone in Jerusalem, and dost not know what has happened there in these days? (19) And he said to them, What things? And they said to him, The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a man, a prophet, powerful in deed and word before God and all the people? (20) And how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be sentenced to death, and have crucified him. (21) But we hoped that it was he who was about to redeem Israel. And beside all, this is the third day since these things were done. (22) And besides, certain women of our country have astonished us, who were early at the tomb. (23) And not having found his body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he is alive. (24) And some of those with us went to the tomb, and found it to be as the women said; but they did not see him. (25) And he said to them, O inconsiderate men, and slow in heart to believe all that the prophets have

Digitized by Google

spoken! (26) Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? (27) And beginning from Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them the things concerning himself in all the writings. (28) And they drew near to the village where they were going, and he made as though he were going further. (29) And they constrained him, saying, Remain with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is declining; and he went in to stay with them. (30) And it came to pass that as he was reclining with them, he took the loaf, and blessed it, and having broken it, gave it to them. (31) And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he became invisible to them. (32) And they said to each other, Did not our heart burn in us as he spoke to us on the way, and expounded to us the writings? (33) And they arose that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven assembled, and those with them, saying, (34) The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon. (35) And they related what had happened on the way, and how he was known to them by the breaking of bread.

§ 305. The appearance of Jesus to the two disciples, who were seeing and hearing mediums, was simply visible, tangible, and audible. You are told that their eyes were holden, that they should not recognize him. This means that Jesus appeared to them with other lineaments than those under which they had known him. It was only while he was at table with him that their eyes were opened, and they knew him; for the figure of the Master appeared to them, and Christ showed himself as they had seen and known him.

We have already explained the audible voice (p. 423), in speaking of the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene and the other women. Was it not easy for Jesus to cause the disciples to hear the discourse which he addressed to them, without his having recourse to spoken words, and yet causing them to bear it so distinctly that they supposed they received it through their outward senses? Such phenomena are well known. You feel that you have been touched, and yet no material hand has been laid upon you. You often hear a noise, which has not been produced by any material object near you.

The two disciples were not only seeing but hearing mediums, and being ignorant of their medianimic faculties, received the impression of the words of Jesus, and thought that they had heard them spoken, just as you think you hear in your sleep. It would have been useless to employ

Digitized by Google

spoken words, when the other method, which was better adapted to the disposition of the disciples, was sufficient.

Jesus conversed with them before making himself known, in the matter-of-fact manner which preceded his recognition, and then at the moment that they recognized him, he took bread, and blessed it, and instantly disappeared from their eyes without saying anything more. He acted thus to make a stronger impression on them, and to fix his words more deeply in their memory.

There are only two points in this interview to which it is necessary to direct your attention specially: Jesus said that it was necessary for Christ to suffer all these things, and then to enter into his glory. These words relate to the humanity which was attributed to him. The two disciples, like the Apostles and the people at that time, looked upon Jesus as a man like themselves, "a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and man." Men were afterwards to attribute divinity to him; and this belief was to last until the spiritual nature and origin of Jesus, which was veiled by the letter, should be revealed by the New Revelation. Jesus was unknown by men till the day of his resurrection, but he then made them feel his power and protection; and it was only after this event that his name, and especially the blessings which he conferred on men, became known throughout the world. If Jesus had entered immediately, and without waiting to be asked, he would equally have impressed the imagination of the disciples by what was to follow; but by attempting to proceed, he tested their charity towards a stranger who was liable to be overtaken by night, and thus gave men a lesson and an example. In order to make himself known when he broke the bread, Jesus gave his fluidic body the human characteristics which the disciples knew, and restored its tangibility under this new form. In disappearing from their eyes, he again ceased his tangibility, and his body became fluidic and invisible to them, and returned to space, until the time of his next appearance. The whole transaction took place instantaneously while the Master was at table with the disciples.

Digitized by Google

The manner in which Jesus broke the bread reminded them of what he had already done in their presence; and it was at this moment that he suddenly resumed his former appearance.

The appearance of Jesus to Peter took place while Peter was returning from the tomb, and it was then that he sought for the solution of the incomprehensible problem of his vision. It was a simple apparition; for Jesus appeared and disappeared instantaneously before the eyes of Peter, who was a seeing medium.

MARK, CHAP. XVI.—VERSE 14. LUKE, CHAP. XXIV.—VERSES 36–49.

Appearance of Jesus to the Apostles.

Mark xvi. (14) Lastly he appeared to the eleven as they were seated, and reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen him after he was arisen.

Luke xxiv. (36) And while they were speaking of these things, Jesus himself stood in their midst, and saith to them, Peace be with you. (37) And they were alarmed and terrified, and thought that they beheld a spirit. (38) And he said to them, Why are ye alarmed, and wherefore do doubts arise in your hearts? (39) Behold my hands and my feet, for it is I myself; feel me and look at me; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.* (40) And saying this, he showed them his hands and his feet. (41) And as they could not yet believe for joy, and wondered, he said to them, Have you anything eatable here? (42) And they gave him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. (43) And he took them, and ate in their presence. (44) And he said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all those things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and the Prophets and Psalms about me. (45) Then he opened their understanding, that they might understand the writings. (46) And he said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it was needful for the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day. (47) And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (48) And you are the witnesses of these things. (49) And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, and you shall remain in the city of Jerusalem until you shall be clothed with power from on high.

§ 306. There is nothing in the actions of Jesus which should surprise you. Was it not necessary for him to strengthen men in their belief in the material existence of

* One of the early Christian writers gives an important variation of this passage: "I am not a spirit without body."—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

his body? Was it not needful for him to impress them more deeply with the gratitude which his "sacrifice" should inspire, by bringing it within reach of the intelligence of material men?

Had Jesus made known his spiritual origin, and showed himself to the disciples only under a fluidic appearance, these superstitious men would have been frightened. They would have remembered the prohibition to invoke the dead, and would have thought that they had broken the laws of Moses. Jesus would then have been classed among the spectres which issue from their tombs, and would have equally been regarded as human; but their minds were impressed by a tangibility of the causes of which they were ignorant. Jesus, therefore, gave them all the proofs which were necessary to convince them, even taking food, which disappeared in the manner which we have already explained.

Supposing Jesus had revealed himself to men as he was, what explanations would not have been needed; and what would have been the consequences? What a dangerous weapon would have been placed in the hands of men by spiritual science, of which you still make so bad a use! It was needful that faith should be blind, until the eyes of the soul should be strong enough to bear the light.

Here, as in all similar cases, the Gospel narratives explain and complete each other, and those of Mark and Luke should not be isolated from that of John (xx. 19–29). Mark confines himself to stating the fact of the appearance of Jesus to the eleven Apostles, without detailing the circumstances and manner of the successive appearances which preceded his "ascension." Luke gives an account of the first appearance to the Apostles, before John wrote; but he has omitted the appearance which took place eight days afterwards in the presence of Thomas; and this led him to assert that the eleven Apostles were present. Thomas, indeed, saw the Master like the ten other Apostles; but, as John relates, he only saw him at his second appearance. But these trifling variations in the narratives have no bearing on the work of regeneration which Jesus came to accomplish.

Digitized by Google

The words recorded by Mark (xvi. 14) relate generally to the incredulity with which the eleven Apostles received the story of Mary Magdalene and the other women, and the two disciples; and more especially to Thomas, on account of his incredulity when he heard the story of the other Apostles.

There are two points to which we must call your attention. Jesus appeared in the midst of the disciples while the doors of their place of meeting were closed from fear of the Jews. He therefore entered with his fluidic body, as happens in cases of the appearance of spirits, and when he made himself visible to all, he instantaneously rendered it tangible.

Although the disciples were ignorant of the existence and causes of tangibility, they knew of the apparitions of spirits. At the moment when Jesus appeared to them they were influenced by the narrative of the appearances of Jesus which had already taken place; and when he suddenly appeared in the midst of them while the doors were closed, they were seized with terror and amazement, and doubted in their minds whether it was really Jesus who had risen from the dead, or if it was the appearance of a spirit, which, to their minds, excluded the idea of any resurrection. Thus Jesus did not confine himself to words, but gave them all the proofs necessary to convince them of the reality of the facts. It was needful for him to act thus for the interests of the present, and to leave it to the future Revelation, to explain the spiritual phenomena which took place at the time of that appearance, and the nature of the body which he assumed for his earthly mission.

The words of Jesus recorded by Luke (xxiv. 49) are veiled by the letter. The Master promised that he would soon send the Apostles, under the visible form of tongues of fire, the superior spirits who were to aid them in their mission; and that after he had left them by rising to heaven, and disappearing finally from human eyes, they must return to Jerusalem, and remain there until they should be clothed with this power from on high.

Digitized by Google

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVIII.—VERSES 16–20. MARK, CHAP. XVI.—VERSES 15–20. LUKE, CHAP. XXIV. VERSES 50–53.

The Ascension.

Matth. xxviii. (16) And the eleven disciples went forth into Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. (17) And seeing him, they did obeisance to him; but they doubted. (18) And Jesus came up to them, and spoke to them, saying, All authority is given to me in heaven and earth. (19) Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you every day until the consummation of the age. Amen.

Mark xvi. (15) And he said to them, Go forth into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. (16) He who believes and is baptised shall be saved; but he who does not believe shall be condemned. (17) And these signs shall follow those who believe. In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; (18) They shall lift up serpents, and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall come forth well. (19) Then the Lord, after he had spoken to them, was received up into heaven, and sat down on the right hand of God. (20) And these went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with the signs which followed. Amen.

Luke xxiv. (50) And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifted up his hands and blessed them, (51) And it came to pass that while he was blessing them he was separated from them, and taken up into heaven. (52) And they did obeisance to him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. (53) And they were constantly in the Temple, praising and blessing God.

§ 307. After the second appearance to the disciples when Thomas was with them (John xx. 24–29), Jesus took them out as far as Bethany, and raised his hands and blessed them (Luke xxiv. 50), and it was there that he directed them to go to Galilee, to the mountain where they were to see him (Matth. xxviii. 16), and thus it happened that as he was blessing them, he was separated from them (in Galilee), and seeing him, they did obeisance to him, and he was raised up to heaven; after which they returned to Jerusalem with great joy (Luke xxiv. 51, 53; Matth. xxviii. 17).

It was while the disciples were travelling from different points towards Galilee, that Jesus appeared on the shores

Digitized by Google

of the Lake of Tiberias to Simon Peter, Thomas, called Didymus, Nathaniel, who was from Cana in Galilee; the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples, who were together, and had gone fishing.

The words recorded by Matthew (xxviii. 18–20) and Mark (xvi. 15–19) were spoken on the mountain; and Jesus afterwards raised his hands and blessed the disciples, and while blessing them was lifted up to heaven (Mark xvi. 19; Luke xxiv. 50–51).

Then, as Luke says (v. 52), (though he and the other Evangelists omitted what passed after the ascension of Jesus,* which was to be recorded in the Acts of the Apostles), the disciples, after doing homage to Jesus, returned to Jerusalem. The details of their return (except their standing on the Mount of Olives, which was mentioned afterwards†) were unimportant, and not worth recording for the instruction of future generations.

The Evangelists did not relate in detail all the various appearances of Jesus, any more than all the actions which he performed; but only those which were needful for the results which were to spring from the Master's earthly mission. John has told you as much (xx. 30; xxi. 35).

It was needful to inform men, in addition to what was recorded in the Gospels, that Jesus appeared to the Apostles during forty days,‡ speaking to them of the kingdom of God.

You are told (Matth. xxviii. 17), that when the eleven Apostles saw Jesus on the mountain, they did homage to him, and yet they doubted. But you must understand that these last words do not apply to the Apostles, who were then all convinced, and who did homage to Jesus when they saw him. The Apostles did not go to the mountain alone, but were followed by a multitude of others; and it was some of these who doubted, knowing nothing of the "resurrection" of Jesus, and of his successive appearances, except from hearsay. But what they were then about to see and hear

* Acts i. 10, 11. † Acts i. 12. ‡ Acts i. 3.

Digitized by Google

would confirm all that they had heard, in the most startling manner. Their doubts were to be dispelled, and they were about to receive the faith which already animated the Apostles.

Jesus drew near, and addressed all the disciples, saying, "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." These words, spiritually interpreted, allude to his position as the protector and ruler of your planet, who is entrusted with all power over incarnate and errant spirits.

(Matth. xxviii. 19–20.)—Baptism in the name of the Father is an invocation addressed to the Supreme Being, who governs all the universes in infinity and eternity. Baptism in the name of the Son calls attention to him who watches over the fate of your planet; the Son of God by his perfect purity, and your Master by his power. In the name of the Holy spirit it appeals to the secret intelligence proceeding from the Creator, and manifested towards you by the good spirits, who teach you justice, love and charity, which include all virtues and all duties. They inspire you to practise them, and thus bring you light and truth by medianimic inspiration and communication.

We have just mentioned the good spirits. By the Holy Spirit you must understand good spirits of every class, and of every degree of elevation in the spiritual hierarchy. Evil inspirations or communications cannot proceed from any good spirit.

When the good spirits are not sufficiently elevated to give you the amount of light and knowledge which you ought to receive, they are aided by spirits more elevated than themselves; and these again are aided by spirits superior to themselves in the spiritual hierarchy. The inspiration which flows from God through the pure spirits, who receive it directly, is thus transmitted to you in the descending scale; or else the good spirits make way for those who are more elevated than themselves, and sufficiently so for the necessities of the case. Good spirits, whatever their rank in the spiritual hierarchy, are always the organs of truth relative to the

Digitized by Google

intelligence of man in proportion to what he is able to receive and to understand. The evil and inferior spirits of darkness alone teach men error and falsehood, with the object of deceiving them.

Baptism was the material sign which was to unite the Christians. The baptism which Jesus directed his disciples to confer on men was both that of water and of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of water was only to be given, as a symbol, to the adult who was responsible for his actions; and the baptism of the Holy Spirit was to follow according to the merit of the neophyte. In such a case, the baptisers always invoked the aid of the good spirits, under the name of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of water was a transitory and material sign, round which the Christians could rally themselves, under the reign of the letter, which was to be preliminary to the advent of the Spirit. It was intended afterwards to give place to the baptism of the Spirit only, which man can obtain for himself, with the aid, protection, and inspiration of the good spirits, by constantly endeavouring to practise everything which Jesus commanded, in spirit, and in truth.

The words of Jesus, "Behold I am with you always, even to the end of the age," relate to his mission as the protecting and ruling spirit of your earth; a mission which began with the formation of your globe, and which shall last for ages of ages. Thus these words included the present and the future. They applied in the first instance to his earthly mission; they apply to your own days, and will continue to be applicable in future (apart from all external religions), to all men who constantly endeavour to practise love towards the Creator, and love of the neighbour as oneself, for then and then only are men truly disciples of Jesus.

The mission which Jesus gave his disciples, to go among all nations, and teach them to observe all things, whatsoever he had commanded them, was not a monopoly or the exclusive privilege of anybody at that time, and never ought to be made so, either in your own days, or in future. The

Digitized by Google

thought of Jesus, in spirit and in truth, appeals to all well-intentioned men, and has as little to do with any outward forms of worship as with their costumes. It invites them to instruct all nations in everything relating to the progress of the spirit, whether moral, physical, or intellectual; and to teach them, by example as well as precept, all the things which he has commanded, and which are all, without exception, included in the double commandment, to love God above all things, and one's neighbour as oneself. This commandment was given to men that they might practise it in spirit and in truth to its fullest extent, and under all its aspects; that all might thus be one, by loving each other, and always acting towards one another as they would that others should act towards them.

Whatever efforts men may make to restrict the light, by only allowing those rays to shine forth which they wish to dispense, it must needs be that the Master's word shall spread, and be heard at every point of the globe; but before it can be received and bear fruit, it must be sustained by a lively, strong, and unalterable faith. It must not be only a feeling of empty pride, inspired in men by differences of religion. The Christianity of Christ is one, and one alone, for your planet and its humanity. It consists in practising charity under all its forms; and he who attains to this difficult point is a Christian—a Christian after Christ's own heart, and one of those who really walk in his ways.

(Mark xvi. 16.) "He who is baptized" (formerly a material rite, as an outward sign; now a moral action) is he who places himself truly under the protection of God and of the Master and Ruler of your planet; and under the influence and inspirations of the good spirits. But this baptism cannot exist unless he who asks for it has faith; for otherwise how would it avail him? Faith is the sister of Hope, and they are both the daughters of Charity and Love; and this Faith leads to works, and, when joined to works, is consummated by them.

He who believes this is saved. That is, he has no longer

Digitized by Google

to suffer the expiatory reincarnation reserved for guilty spirits, but he beholds new paths of purification and progress open before him by faith, by reincarnation in a world higher than that which he has left. He who does not believe this, and does not practise the sublime and simple morality of which Jesus is the personification, is condemned. That is, after suffering in the errant state the expiation which is appropriate to his faults or crimes, he suffers expiatory reincarnation with the object of reparation and progress, recommencing what has to be done over again.

"These signs shall follow those who believe; in my name they shall cast out demons." By the aid of superior spirits, supported, when needful, by that of the pure spirits, who are all able to drive away evil ones instantaneously from those who are obsessed or subjugated.

"They shall speak with new tongues." Being rendered speaking mediums, under the influence and fluidic action of the good spirits.

"They shall take up serpents in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." They shall be preserved by the action of the protecting spirits, who will annul the poison by means of appropriate fluids, invisibly employed to that end. Let not your physiologists and chemists who think themselves so wise, and are still completely ignorant of the nature and properties of fluids, deny this; but they will long remain ignorant of the powers and the mysteries of the fluidic creation. To arrive at this result, humanity has much to labour, progress, and acquire, both morally and intellectually. You will learn more and more, as you advance with humility and simplicity inspired by charity and love, and with the desire of progress. You will advance by labour in the paths of light, knowledge, and truth, and thus in the knowledge of the laws of nature which govern the fluids, and their effects.

"They shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover." By the invisible aid of the good spirits who dispense purifying, regenerative, or strengthening fluids, fitted

Digitized by Google

to produce an instantaneous cure. Human magnetism works thus, under the secret agency of spirit-magnetism, by the will of man.

The words of Jesus (Mark xvi. 17, 18) were words of the present, or at least of the immediate future, and the Acts of the Apostles bear witness to their fulfilment. But his words were likewise words of the future; for the works which the Apostles accomplished will be reproduced among you at the appointed time.

"Jesus rose up towards heaven, and entered into a cloud which hid him from their eyes." Jesus rose above them into space, by laying aside his tangibility, but still remained visible. Then he disappeared as he entered the cloud, which had been formed of opaque fluids, by spiritual agency. It concealed him from their view, and he restored the fluids which had constituted his visible and perispritic body to the sources whence he had drawn them.

"He ascended to heaven, and sat down on the right hand of God." You should understand the position which Jesus occupies, though it is not that of eternal inertia, as men have supposed. According to human ideas, the right hand is the place of honour. Jesus, who is entrusted with the charge of your development and progress, continues to prosecute his mission in space as one of the first ministers of God, as the protector and ruler of your planet, and watches over the purification and transformation both of the planet and of its humanity. After having brought your globe from the stage of incandescent fluids to the material condition in which it now exists, he came among you, clothed in a fluidic body, in harmony with his own spiritual nature, but also relatively in harmony with your sphere. As he himself promised and predicted, and as the "two men (or superior spirits) clothed in white," who appeared suddenly to his disciples, proclaimed,* Jesus will come again, and will descend from heaven in the same manner in which his disciples saw him ascend to the spiritual state. He shall

* Acts i. 10, 11.

Digitized by Google

descend from heaven on clouds; but this time with great majesty, and in all his spiritual glory, when he shall have led you and your planet from the material state to the verge of the purely fluidic state, and when you are ready to attain perfection. He will then lead your world, now truly become "his kingdom," into the regions of pure fluids, where it will become one of the "kingdoms of the Father," where only pure spirits dwell, or can dwell.

END OF PART I.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

PART I.—(*Continued.*)

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW, MARK, AND LUKE.

	PAGE
The Sabbath made for Man	1
Cure of the Man with the palsied hand, on the Sabbath	5
Mission of the Messiah	8
Blasphemy of the Pharisees	10
The Strong Man Armed—Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit—The Tree known by its Fruit	18
Sign demanded by the Pharisees	26
Evil Instincts and Passions	29
The Brother, Sister, and Mother of Jesus	34
Parable of the Sower	40
Parable of the Darnel in the Field	55
The Grain of Mustard Seed—The Leaven and the Meal—Seed sown in the Ground	57
Explanation of the Parable of the Darnel	64
The Hidden Treasure	70
The Pearl of Great Price	71
The Parable of the Fishing-net	71
A Prophet is not without Honour save in his own Country	72
Death of John the Baptist—Hebrew Belief in Reincarnation	74
Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes	76
Jesus and Peter walking on the Lake	80

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Touching the Dress of Jesus 84
Unwashed Hands—Real Impunity 85
The Canaanitish Woman 92
Cure of the Deaf Mute 95
Sick Persons Healed—The Seven Loaves 97
The Pharisees and Sadducees ask for a Sign 99
Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees 100
Cure of a Blind Man 101
Reincarnation—Mission of Peter 106
Jesus foretells his Death, and rebukes Peter 123
The Kingdom of God 129
Transfiguration of Jesus 134
The Spirit of Elijah reincarnated as John the Baptist . 148
The Lunatic—Prayer and Fasting 154
Jesus foretells his Death and Resurrection 164
Jesus pays Tithes 167
Lessons of Love, Charity, and Humility 169
Calling down Fire from Heaven 173
Offences 175
The Lost Sheep and the Lost Drachma 182
The Prodigal Son 186
Parable of the Unjust Steward 190
Conclusion of the Parable of the Unjust Steward . . 194
Pardon of Injuries 195
Duty and Humility 199
The Ten Lepers 200
The Kingdom of God 202
Signs of the Second Coming of Jesus 205
Binding and Loosing—Presence of Christ 211
Pardon of Injuries 221
The Law of Marriage 223
The Conditions of Marriage 231
Humility the source of all Virtue 239
Parable of the Widow and the Unjust Judge 240
The Pharisee and the Tax-gatherer 242
The Rich Young Man 243
Promises to the Apostles 248

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard 252
Jesus foretells his Crucifixion 258
The Sons of Zebedee 260
Conversion of Zacchæus 263
The Blind Men of Jericho Healed 264
Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem—The Temple Cleansed —Prophecy of the Destruction of Jerusalem . . 265
The Barren Fig-Tree 272
Jesus silences the Chief Priests and Elders 275
Parable of the Vineyard and the wicked Husbandmen 277
Continuation of the Parable of the Husbandmen in the Vineyard—Jesus the Chief Corner-Stone . . 281
Cure of Dropsy 284
Humility 285
Disinterestedness 286
Parable of the Feast 287
God and Cæsar 291
The Resurrection 295
Love of God and of the Neighbour 298
Parable of the Good Samaritan 301
Jesus at the House of Martha 303
Christ and David 305
Scribes and Pharisees 306
God alone is the Father, and Christ alone is the Teacher 307
Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites 308
Hypocritical Teachers 310
The Widow's Mite 314
End of the Age 315
Transformation of the Earth 321
False Christs—False Prophets 328
Signs of the Coming of Christ 331
Parable of the Fig-Tree 335
Times of Change Unknown 337
Need for Vigilance 341
Parable of the Faithful and Unfaithful Servants . . . 342
Responsibility of the Spirit 344

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Parable of the Ten Virgins 344
Watchfulness 346
Parable of the Talents 347
Parable of the Last Judgment 352
Perfume Poured on the Head of Jesus 358
Treachery of Judas 361
The Last Supper 366
Pride, Ambition, and Domination Forbidden . . . 373
Predictions of Jesus 375
Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane 377
Arrest of Jesus 384
Jesus before Caiaphas 389
Peter's Denial 391
Death of Judas 393
Jesus before Pilate 394
Insults to Jesus 398
Jesus led to Execution 399
Crucifixion of Jesus 401
Insults to Jesus on the Cross 403
The Penitent Thief 404
Apparent Death of Jesus 406
Earthquake and Prodigies 410
Burial of Jesus 413
The Stone Closing the Door of the Tomb Sealed and Guarded 413
Visit of the Women to the Tomb 416
Appearance of Jesus to the Two Disciples 434
Appearance of Jesus to the Apostles 437
The Ascension 440

Contents of Vol. II. 449

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY ALLAN KARDEC.

THE SPIRIT'S BOOK.

Containing the Principles of Spiritist Doctrine on the Immortality of the Soul, &c. &c., according to the Teachings of Spirits of High Degree, transmitted through various mediums, collected and set in order by ALLAN KARDEC. Translated from the 120th thousand by ANNA BLACKWELL. Crown 8vo, cloth, 7*s.* 6*d.*

THE MEDIUM'S BOOK;

Or, Guide for Mediums and for Evocations. Containing the Theoretic Teachings of Spirits concerning all kinds of Manifestations, the Means of Communication with the Invisible World, the Development of Medianimity, &c. &c. By ALLAN KARDEC. Translated by ANNA BLACKWELL. Crown 8vo, cloth, 7*s.* 6*d.*

HEAVEN AND HELL;

Or, The Divine Justice Vindicated in the Plurality of Existences. By ALLAN KARDEC. Translated by ANNA BLACKWELL. Crown 8vo, cloth, 7*s.* 6*d.*

London : TRÜBNER & Co. Ludgate Hill.

THE PROBABLE EFFECT OF SPIRITISM UPON THE SOCIAL, MORAL, AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF SOCIETY.

A Prize Essay.

By ANNA BLACKWELL.

London : TRÜBNER & Co. Price 6*d.*

Digitized by Google

THE FOUR GOSPELS

EXPLAINED BY THEIR WRITERS

WITH AN APPENDIX

ON

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

EDITED BY

J. B. ROUSTAING

TRANSLATED BY

W. F. KIRBY

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III

LONDON

TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL

1881

[*All rights reserved*]

101. f. 791.

Digitized by Google

BODLEIAN LIBRARY
19 MAY 83
OXFORD.

Digitized by Google

PART II.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

It is the Spirit which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you are spirit and truth.—JOHN vi. 64.

The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.—2 COR. iii. 6.

JOHN, CHAP. I.—VERSES 1–18.

The Word.—Mission of John the Baptist.

(1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was in the presence of God, and the Word was God. (2) He was in the beginning in the presence of God. (3) Through him all things were made, and without him nothing was made which was made. (4) In him was life, and the life was the light of men. (5) And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not hinder it. (6) There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. (7) He came as a testimony, to bear witness concerning the Light, that all should believe through him. (8) This man was not that Light, but came that he should bear witness to the Light. (9) The Light was the true Light, which lighteneth every man who cometh into the world. (10) It was in the world, and the world existed through it, and the world knew it not. (11) It came to its own things, and its own people did not receive it. (12) And as many as received him, he gave them power to become the children of God, to those who believe in his name. (13) These do not become so from blood, nor from the will of the flesh, nor from the will of man, but from God. (14) And the Word became flesh, and took up its abode in us, and we admired his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of love and truth. (15) John bore witness about him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I said, He who cometh after me was before me, for he was before me. (16) And we all received of his fulness, and grace for grace. (17) For the Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (18) No one hath ever seen God; the only-begotten Son, being in the bosom of the Father, hath revealed him.

§ 1. These verses have given rise to many interpretations and disputes, and have contributed to the ascription of

Digitized by Google

divinity to Jesus Christ.* But men will abandon this error. Those who attach themselves to the letter, without comparing texts or seeking for the Spirit, cannot perceive the object of these words as the condition and means of the progress of humanity, and of its ascending course to light and truth. They cannot understand that when intelligence develops, its views are enlarged in proportion. If they would reflect seriously, without preconceived ideas, they would perceive that God has prepared and disposed everything to give men gradually and progressively what they were able to receive, and to dispense to each the daily bread of intelligence, according to his faculties and necessities. They would then perceive how wisely God has prepared everything by successive revelations to lead men gradually to a knowledge of the Father, God; and of the Son, Jesus Christ. The spiritual era now opening before you through the perpetual and always progressive revelations of the Spirit of Truth, is to lead you on to the time of the second coming of Jesus, to manifest the unveiled Truth.

At the commencement of the Hebrew period, although the idea of the One God prevailed over the divinities worshipped by the masses, among all nations, yet it was only for the initiated, and the multitude were polytheists. This arose from the communication between the spiritual and corporeal worlds, which is one of the laws of Nature, and as eternal as that God from whose will it proceeds. The Oriental nations believed in gods in heaven, and sons of gods among men, who were miraculously born of virgins, and were afterwards raised to the rank of "gods;" and the Jews had imbibed these popular ideas during the Captivity.

At the opening of the Hebrew era, the most civilized races of men had arrived at a phase when it was needful that the Divine Unity should be placed before the eyes of all, by a spirit-revelation of God, as One, Alone, and Indi-

* Although the Commentary on the first chapter of John is somewhat tedious, the importance of the subject compels me to retain many of the repetitions of the original.—TRANS.

Digitized by Google

visible, the Creator; but not by the divisibility of his essence. Polytheism was then doomed to disappear gradually under the influence of successive revelations, in the course of ages.

God manifested the Divine Unity to all, when he gave men the Decalogue on Mount Sinai,* by the instrumentality of a superior spirit, and proclaimed through Moses, "Thou shalt have no other Gods but me." I am the One Eternal and Only God; I am That I am."

Afterwards, conformably with the necessity for linking the present with the past, God, having thus proclaimed Monotheism, proclaimed himself the God of Gods, by the prophets in Israel, who were inspired and guided by the superior spirits, in the words (Ps. lxxxii. 1 and 6): "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth the gods." "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High." God thus proclaimed himself to be the Uncreated Creator; and that all creatures exist only from him, by him, and in him, and are thus distinct from him; and that all spirits, whether called gods in heaven or on earth, whatever may be their purity and elevation, are all creatures; all derived from the same principle, and having had originally the same origin. They are therefore his sons; and all brethren, as regards each other. But the time was not yet come when men should thus understand the Divine words in spirit and in truth. That time was only to come through the advent of the Spirit, after humanity had been struggling for ages in the trammels of infamy, and had slowly and laboriously progressed through the stages of its childhood and youth, to the age preceding its manhood, under the empire of the veil of the letter, the shell of mystery, and the prestige of miracle.

The ancient polytheism was to be completely and finally uprooted in the course of ages, and was to disappear from the minds of the masses among civilized nations, whose mission it should be to advance those who were in an

* See the explanations given in Part III. relative to the manner in which the Decalogue was given, and promulgated.

Digitized by Google

inferior condition. Men were thus to be led to recognize God as one and indivisible, the Creator of all existing creatures. But for this, a transitional period was necessary, which was to be effected in a manner appropriate to the state of intelligence, and necessities of every age and era, by means of successive and progressive revelations, under the influence of the veil of the letter.

This transition could only be accomplished by a messenger from God sent among men on a superior mission; and this could only be effected by Jesus. He alone was entrusted with the development and progress of men, whom he will lead to perfection, and whose efforts he directs, devoting himself to the completion of his work. Hence arose the necessity for the Hebrew Revelation, which announced the advent of the Messiah, and prepared the way for his earthly mission.

But Jesus being a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, the architect, protector, and ruler of your planet, could not* assume a material body incompatible with his spiritual nature. Nevertheless, he could not appear among men to accomplish his superior mission without clothing himself (in accordance with the laws of Nature, and the immutable will of God, which never varies) with a body in harmony with his own nature, and relatively in harmony with your sphere; and such as to create an illusion in the eyes of men. It was therefore needful for him to assume a body which, though not of the same nature as that of the inhabitants of the earth, should be similar to it, and possess the same form. Men could then regard him as one of themselves, and be attracted to him by this resemblance, in order that their hearts might be touched by his words, teachings and example, and that his pure and spotless life of devotion, charity and love, should show them how much nobler he was than themselves, that they might be led to love, admire and imitate him. But seeing that his actions were greater than those of men, they were astonished and overawed, and led to perceive that he was a messenger of God, and that what he taught likewise proceeded from God.

* See the explanations given in vol. i. § 14, pp. 18-30, &c.

Digitized by Google

Therefore Jesus Christ was to be regarded by men, during his earthly mission, as a man like themselves: hence the necessity for his being apparently born of a human father and mother; and although this origin was simply apparent, men were nevertheless to regard it as real. His earthly mission was designed to effect the transition which should uproot the ancient polytheism in the minds of men, preserve the knowledge of the Son, and the knowledge of the Father, and lead men on to the period when the Spirit could be freed from the letter. In order to attain this end, the Divine foresight and wisdom deemed it necessary to appropriate successive revelations to the popular opinions, prejudices, state of intelligence, and necessities of the age, and of the generations which were to follow. In consequence of these revelations, the superior mission of the Messiah, Christ, took place among the Hebrews. The masses had brought back from the captivity the popular idea of Sons of God living among men; and hence, notwithstanding the monotheism which had been forced upon them,* they believed that God communicated with men directly, under the name of the Holy Spirit. The masses likewise held the belief that God was corporeal; and this was the idea which Jesus designed to destroy when he said, "God is a Spirit." We shall explain the full sense and meaning of these words hereafter.

In accordance with the popular opinions of the age, and the monotheism taught by Moses and the prophets, which the masses did not understand in spirit and in truth, it was needful that a Divine man should appear, who should be regarded as both man and God, and who should be deified by men, owing to the veils and uncertainties of the Hebrew and Messianic Revelations, as the only Son of the Father, and equal to him. This belief was to be founded on the events of his earthly mission; his pure and spotless life; his mysterious (miraculous or Divine) origin; the miracles which he accomplished; his sublime apotheosis by his apparent death and resurrection, which men regarded as

* Compare Ex. chaps. xxxii., xxxii. and xxxiv.

Digitized by Google

real; his appearances to the women and the disciples; and his ascent to the ethereal regions.

This was necessary that men might purify their ideas by disentangling them from the trammels of the ancient polytheism, and by endeavouring to retain plurality in unity; for the Son of the One Eternal God who had said, "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have none other gods but me," could be none other than the only Son of the Father, the only God with him; for you must remember that both the Hebrews and Christians believed that your earth was the whole Creation; the only place inhabited by the creatures of the Lord.

Thus Jesus was to be regarded during his earthly mission as a man among men, the son of Mary and Joseph; but after the accomplishment of his mission, and not until then, men regarded him as the son of the Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Spirit; and thus as the Son of God. Here the necessity and object of the Hebrew Revelation, announcing the coming of Him in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; the Messiah or the Christ. At first they openly proclaimed his human origin, as born of the posterity of Abraham, and of the house of David; but afterwards the prophets of Israel announced, though under the obscurity of the letter, the miraculous and divine origin of a son born in the house of David, to whom the Lord himself would give a sign; "that a virgin should conceive, and bear a son, whose name should be called Emmanuel." But the meaning of this remained hidden, until it was revealed by the Evangelist Matthew, who added, under spiritual inspiration, "That is, God with us." Consequently, when Jesus appeared on your earth, the Hebrews interpreted the prophecies to teach that the Messiah was to be a man like themselves, who should be of the posterity of Abraham, and the Son of David.*

Hence the object and necessity of the revelation made by the angel to Mary and Joseph, under such circumstances that it remained secret till after the accomplishment of the

* Isaiah vii. 13, 14; Matth. i. 21-23.

Digitized by Google

earthly mission of Christ. The Apostles were secretly informed of it by Mary, and only proclaimed it to the world when it could be made known at a fitting opportunity, and with good results, under the inspiration of the superior spirits who aided and directed them in the accomplishment of their mission.

The successive revelations of Moses and the prophets, who announced the advent of the Messiah, and thus laid the foundation of his mission; and the subsequent revelation made by the angel to Mary and Joseph; the work of the earthly mission of Jesus, which was recorded by the Evangelists under the inspiration of superior spirits; and, lastly, the earthly mission of the Apostles, were thus designed to uproot the old polytheism entirely, but by gradual stages, among the more civilized nations, who were destined to make known the truth to those who were less advanced. Thus men were to be brought to a knowledge of the One God, the Father; of Jesus Christ, who is not God, but a spirit of perfect purity; and of the Holy Spirit, who is not God, but figuratively represents the sacred phalanx of the good spirits of the Lord, who are the ministers of his will, providence and goodness, and maintain universal life and harmony on your planet, under the direction of Jesus, your protector, ruler, and master, who is the representative of God, the Father of each and of all.

Thus, too, men were led to know the nature and origin of Christ and of all created spirits, and were led on to the new era of the Christianity of Christ, which will bring you by successive revelations to the predicted time when you shall have arrived at perfection, and Christ will reappear among you, clothed in his full spiritual glory.

In order to give the men of that age, and following generations, what they were able to bear, it was necessary for Jesus to veil his nature and spiritual origin by the letter, as had likewise been done in the case of the previous revelations, to provide for the period of transition, and to lay the foundations of the future revelation of the Spirit of Truth. In order to be understood and listened to, he was obliged

Digitized by Google

to appropriate his language and actions to the intelligence and prejudices of the period, as well as to the traditions of the prophets of the old law, and the aspirations of the people, or his mission would have been unfruitful. But this gave rise to transitory opinions, by which he was first regarded by men as a man like themselves, and after the commencement of his public mission, as a prophet. Afterwards men ascribed divinity to him, and regarded him as both God and man, thus making the finite body of a man contain the Infinite, and representing the One Eternal God as subject to life and death in a mortal and perishable body; that God who is, has been, and will be, throughout eternity, and who has alone possessed immortality from everlasting o everlasting.

All the aspirations and opinions of which you now perceive the necessity and object, were transitory and preparatory to the advent of the Spirit. All have been useful in the course of time; and the efforts which have been made to pierce the darkness of the letter, have caused sparks to leap forth from the hidden depths of the Spirit, and have thus prepared the way for the Spirit of Truth to raise the veil from the letter, and to strip the shell from mystery and miracle, to manifest the light and truth within.

During the course of ages, and the ripening of human intelligence, these aspirations and opinions have led you on to the new era of the Christianity of Christ, and to the promised Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, who descends to you by the will of the Father, to tell you what Jesus could not tell during his earthly mission, and to teach you the truth which you are now prepared to support, by freeing the Spirit from the letter.

Jesus taught men to distrust the letter by saying, "It is the Spirit which giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you are spirit and life" (John vi. 64).

It was the Apostle John who was chosen to record these words of the Divine Model, his beloved Master, under medianimic inspiration; and the Apostle Paul, applying the

Digitized by Google

same words to human interpretations, says: "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. iii. 6).

Interpretation according to the letter is death; or, in other words, leads to error; whereas interpretation according to the Spirit, is life; that is, it leads to truth. But the kingdom of the letter is transitory in its nature, and preparatory to the advent of the Spirit. Still it was necessary at first, for the letter is for primitive nations, and for the infancy, childhood and youth of humanity, and the Spirit is for nations who have arrived at such a degree of intellectual development that they wish to understand what they should believe, and then blind faith under the veil of the letter is no longer sufficient, but produces only doubt or incredulity. That letter is then of no further use, but leaves faith without support. Such nations require the daily bread of intelligence according to their faculties and necessities. Thus the words of Jesus and Paul, which we have just quoted, were words of the future, and were only to be accomplished in the course of ages.

Jesus, having regard to the Hebrew and angelic revelations, arranged everything, both by words, actions, and events, to be useful for the present, and to prepare the future for the Christian era, under the veil of the letter, and at the same time to prepare for, and to sanction the New Revelation, which should free the Spirit from the letter, at the time of the Spiritual era, under the Empire of the Spirit.

The Apostles were inspired by the spirits of the Lord, who assisted and directed them in their mission, that everything necessary should be said and done; and they followed the paths which Jesus had traced out. Jesus spoke words which were designed to arrest the attention of the people, and to be interpreted literally according to the intelligence of that and subsequent ages, and also pronounced words which were not to be much regarded until they could be explained in spirit and in truth by a new Revelation which had become necessary, and which should at the same time correct the erroneous interpretations which had served as the basis of the opinions which arose, according to the letter, in the

Digitized by Google

infancy of humanity. Even so, the Apostles John and Paul, following in the steps of Jesus, spoke words which were to attract the attention of men immediately, and to be interpreted literally; and others, of which they did not understand the exact meaning, and which men would only dwell upon, when they were explained in spirit and in truth, by the new Revelation, under the Empire of the Spirit.

It was the mission of the Apostles, and especially of Paul, to prepare the way for the Christian era under the dominion of the letter, and also to speak words of which the Spirit was to be purposely veiled by the letter, but which were to serve as the foundation, and anticipated sanction of the future Revelation.

The Apostles John and Paul obeyed the will of the Lord, like the other Apostles, and thus served the present, and prepared for the future. Each acted within the limits of his earthly mission, and under the conditions which the wise foresight of Jesus had arranged. You should not reject any of the words of John or Paul relative to the spiritual nature and origin of Jesus, for they must all be understood and explained according to the Spirit which giveth life; and therefore in spirit and in truth.

The words of John (i. 1-3, 14 and 18), should not be isolated from those spoken by Jesus himself, and recorded by the four Evangelists, nor from those which the Apostle Paul addressed, both to the Jews and Gentiles, to which we will refer you before explaining the former.

When the words of Jesus are illuminated by the Spirit which giveth life, they exclude all idea of the divinity attributed to him by men. They proclaim his inferiority to the Father, whom he declares to be the One True God, and whose messenger and servant he is; while, though veiled by the letter, they reveal his extra-human nature and origin. They refer to his appearance among men, to accomplish his superior mission as the Messiah. Beneath the veil of the letter, too, they disclose his position, as the formative, protecting and ruling Spirit of your globe, who is in direct communion with the Father, and who is alone entrusted

Digitized by Google

with the development and progress of your earth and its humanity, which he is to lead to perfection.

Jesus is never called God. Not only is it impossible to quote any of his words which would permit of its being said, or even imagined; but, on the contrary, they exclude the divinity which men have ascribed to him.

He said to his disciples, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he who believeth in me shall himself do the works which I do, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father,"* and if he himself was God, or equal to God, how could man ever succeed in equalling and surpassing the actions of Jesus?

When the rich young man called him "Good Master," he answered, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one; that is God" (Matth. xix. 16; Mark x. 17; Luke xviii. 18, 19). Consequently he is not God; otherwise, the attribute of "good" would have belonged to him, who was so supremely good among all men; but his words were an indirect and veiled protest against the divinity that he knew would be afterwards attributed to him.

When the scribe asked what was the first of all the commandments, Jesus replied, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One Lord; thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment." The scribe answered and said, "Master, thou hast spoken truly, for there is none other but God, and there is none but he." And Jesus, seeing that he had answered wisely, said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark xii. 28, 29, 32, 34).

By thus quoting Deuteronomy (vi. 4, 5), and sanctioning with his approbation the answer of the Scribe, Jesus proclaimed the God of Israel to be the One, Sole, Eternal God; the Only True God, and that there is none other than he. He thus proscribed beforehand, in the name of the Hebrew Monetheism, the divinity which he foresaw would be attributed to him by men.

When the Jews wished to stone Jesus for saying, "I and

* See the explanation of John xiv. 12.

Digitized by Google

my Father are One," they said, "We are going to stone thee for blasphemy, because thou, being a man, makest thyself equal to God." Jesus answered, "Is it not written in your law, I have said, Ye are gods:—if then he called them gods unto whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), say ye to him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am a Son of God?" (John x. 31-36).

When Jesus spoke thus, and quoted Psalm lxxxii. 6, purposely leaving part of his reply obscure, he prepared for the transitional period under the veil of the letter, and also proscribed any idea of his divinity which might be based on his use of the words, "Son of God," which led to his being regarded as a separate portion of God; and his words reassert and confirm what he said to the scribe. The passage in the Psalm (lxxxii. 1 and 6) runs as follows: "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. I have said, Ye are Gods, and all of you are children of the Most High."

In quoting this Psalm, Jesus proclaims that he is, like the Jews who accused him of blaspheming, and like all others, the Son of the Most High, the Son of God, the God of the Gods, and thus God, in the sense that all are equally the sons of the Most High. Thus he proscribes all idea of his own divinity beforehand, by condemning the sense in which the Jews understood the words which he had just used, "My Father and I are One," when they pretended that he called himself God. Again, by quoting the Psalm, he proclaims, when the spirit is freed from the letter, that he is the brother of men, being a created spirit, sprung from the same origin, and the Son of the Most High, the Son of God; and like all others, the Son of the God of the gods, who is his Father and God, and the Father and God of all men. Men, to whom the word of the Lord is addressed, are his brethren. He proclaims that the God of Israel is the One Sole Indivisible God and Creator, and by quoting the words of the Psalm, he proclaims himself to be God in the sense that men are Gods, either in the transitory polytheistic view

Digitized by Google

of the ancient Hebrews, or in spirit and in truth;* for all are Gods, as being sons of the Most High, the sons of God, the God of the Gods; all creatures and created spirits being equally children of the Uncreated Creator.

When Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene he said, "Go to seek my brethren, and tell them from me, I ascend to my Father and your Father; to my God and your God" (John xx. 17). And when he appeared to her and the other women, he said, "Go and tell my brethren to go into Galilee, and there shall they see me" (Matth. xxviii. 10).

After the Last Supper, and when he was about to deliver himself into the hands of men, he solemnly proscribed the divinity which would be attributed to him by human interpretations, and confirmed everything which he had already said which would exclude his divinity, by saying, "And this is the eternal life, that they might know thee, the Only True God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3).

It is precisely because the Father is the Only True God that Jesus Christ proclaimed his own inferiority with reference to the Father; and thus rejected, and condemned beforehand, the divinity which men would attribute to himself.

He said, "My Father is greater than I" (John xiv. 28). If he was God, and an indivisible, though separate portion of God, and equal to him, he would have been as great as his Father, who is at once his Father and God, and the Father and God of men.

He is the Son of the Most High, the Son of God, like men who are his brethren (John x. 36 and Psalm lxxxii. 1 and 6).

He is the Only Son of God (John iii. 18) as regards your planet, in virtue of his purity, spiritual elevation, and power.

He said to James and John, the sons of Zebedee, in the presence of the other disciples, "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is reserved by my Father." But if he

* Consult the further explanations given below on John i. 1, 2; and x. 31–36.

Digitized by Google

had been God, and equal to him, it would necessarily have been Jesus Christ, as being one with the Father, who might have placed James and John on his right hand and on his left. It is precisely because Jesus Christ is not God that he proclaims the supremacy of God over every created spirit, however elevated; and that God only knows when a spirit is pure enough to sit on the right hand or the left of his messenger.

When Jesus was conversing with his disciples about the end of the world, he said, "But of that day and hour, knoweth no man, neither the angels in the heavens, nor the Son, but the Father only" (Matth. xxiv. 36; Mark xiii. 32). But if the Son, Jesus Christ, was God, or equal to God, he would have known all that God knew, indivisibly with him.

Jesus said, "My doctrine is not my doctrine, but the doctrine of him that sent me. . . . . I speak only in the world that which I have learned, ... I speak only what my Father has taught me" (John vii. 46; viii. 26, 28). But if Jesus Christ had been God, or equal to God, the doctrine of him that sent him, and who was indissolubly one with him, would have been his own. He would have had nothing to learn from God, who was the same as himself, nor could he have been taught anything by him that sent him; for he would have known everything from all eternity, equally with God. It is precisely because Jesus Christ is not God, but the brother of men, being a created spirit, and thus the son of his Father and their Father, his God and their God, that he proclaimed his inferiority to God by saying, "My Father who sent me is he who has instructed me beforehand what I should say, and how I shall speak" (John xii. 49). "I know that my commandment is eternal life; and what I say unto you, I say as My Father has commanded me."

The words, "My Father and I are one" (John x. 30), are purely figurative. They have been taken literally, and materialized; and as they have been isolated from the passages we have just quoted, or are about to quote, they

Digitized by Google

have served as a text for the human interpretations which have attributed divinity to Christ. The Jews understood these words literally and materially, and they based an accusation of blasphemy upon them, for they understood Jesus to mean that he was God, or that he attributed divinity to himself. But the reply that he made to the Jews, though purposely obscure and veiled, having regard to the transitional period which was to follow, when read in connection with Psalm lxxxii. 1 and 6, and interpreted in spirit and in truth, proscribed and rejected beforehand the divinity which was to be attributed to him by the false interpretations of men who have understood the words, "Son of God," and "My Father," literally.

The words, "My Father and I are one," are figurative, and are used to express the unity of thought already existing between God and Christ, which would afterwards exist between the disciples and the other men of your planet. This was soon to be established between the disciples and the Comforter, the Holy Spirit; that is, with the superior spirits who were about to descend to inspire and direct them in the accomplishment of their earthly mission. The union between the disciples and Jesus was to be accomplished by the intervention of these superior spirits; and this shows conclusively the connection of these words of Jesus with others (John xiv. 16, 17, 20; xvii. 1–3, 11, 20–23), which positively exclude the divinity which men have attributed to him.

Here read the following passages, which are explained in their place. (You know why it was necessary for Jesus to veil his words, in speaking of his own nature and origin, in view of the transitional period to follow.)

Matthew xxii. 41–45; Mark xii. 35–37; Luke xx. 41–44; John xvii. 1–5, 20–24; viii. 23, 25, 46; iii. 13; xiv. 16–20.

John the Baptist contrasted those who undergo human incarnation, and Jesus who did not suffer it, in order to proclaim the supremacy of Jesus as the ruler and protector of your planet (John i. 31–35). He was inspired by the

Digitized by Google

superior spirits who aided him in his mission, when he spoke thus to his disciples, who were disputing with the Jews. The words of John the Baptist and of Jesus, though purposely veiled by the letter, demonstrate the spiritual position of Jesus with reference to God, your earth, and its humanity, as the formative, protecting and ruling Spirit of your planet, possessed of all power, as the representative of God both in heaven and earth, over all the errant and incarnate spirits of the planet.

When the Jews took the words of Jesus literally, and not according to the Spirit, and accused him of making himself equal with God, he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do, for all things that the Father doeth, the Son doeth likewise, for the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him everything that he doeth, and will show him greater works than these, that you may marvel."

Jesus thus protested against the accusation of making himself equal to God, and proclaimed his own personality as distinct from that of the Father, and inferior to him, and exerting no creative power, which belongs to God alone, but doing everything as his minister, and as inspired by him; for God shows him, and he thus learns, and acts as he is inspired to act; and God will show him, and thus teach him to perform, still greater works.

When calling God his Father, and speaking of himself as his Son, he addressed God, saying, "Thou hast given him power over all men, that he may give eternal life to all those whom thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 1–3).

He said to his disciples, "My Father hath put all things into my hands" (Matth. xi. 27). He thus proclaims, in spirit and in truth, that God is One Alone, and Indivisible, and therefore that he, the Son, is not God, but a spirit created by God.

The following passages spoken by Jesus on different occasions, contain the same idea: Matth. xxviii. 18; John

Digitized by Google

xiii. 13; xiv. 6; xviii. 14. The words of Jesus, though always veiled, constantly exhibit him in direct communion with the Father, and alone entrusted with the development and progress of your planet.

Here read John v. 11, 18, 51; vi. 33; viii. 42; xii. 46. After saying (Matth. xi. 27), "My Father has put all things into my hands," he adds, "And no man knoweth the Son, but the Father, and no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." Jesus says also, "And this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." He thus shows that God would make known "who is the Son," by the spiritual revelation, and that this knowledge could not be attained by men except in this manner. Again he shows that Jesus alone can give men the full knowledge of God; that is, show them the unveiled truth, and lead them to perfection (read John xvii. 1–3, 11, 20–24, 26), all which passages are explained below, in their proper places.

Let us now consider the words spoken by the Apostle Paul with reference to the spiritual nature and origin of Jesus, and the nature of the body which he assumed for his earthly mission; though all these things were veiled from Paul, as well as from the other Apostles by the letter of the Hebrew and angelic revelations, and by the letter of the words of Jesus. The words of Paul were designed to be useful during the transitional period of the Christian era, and to lay the foundations of the future revelation of the Spirit of Truth, when all which had been hidden under the veil of the letter should be explained. It was necessary for the earthly mission of Paul that he should be ignorant of the nature and origin of Jesus; for men are always given what they are able to bear, and it was left for the promised revelation to reveal what was hidden, when men had become able to receive it. Paul, like the other disciples and the multitude, regarded Jesus as an exceptional being, whom human intelligence could not comprehend; for, under the veil of the letter, and the influence of mystery and miracle, Jesus

Digitized by Google

was regarded as possessed of both a human and divine nature and origin.

The letter of the various revelations prepared everything needful for the progress of the human spirit, and as everything preparatory must contain the elements of future successive and progressive revelations, Jesus was the Son of David.

The Apostle Paul attributes the following human origin and nature to Jesus: he is sprung, according to the flesh, from the Patriarchs, the fathers of the Israelites (Rom. ix. 3–5), and thus proceeds from your humanity. He was a man subject to death for you; he died for the sins of men, and rose again (1 Cor. xv. 3–10; Rom. viii. 34). "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou lookest upon him? Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels; thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, through the suffering of death, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, through whom and by whom all things exist, in leading many sons to glory, to perfect the leader of their salvation by suffering"* (Heb. ii. 6, 7, 9, 10). "For verily he did not attain to the angels, but he attained to the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour those who are tempted. . . . . Behold I, and the children whom God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also in like manner took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him who hath the power of death; that is, the devil." (Heb. ii. 16–18, 13, 14.)

These words were taken for realities then, but were transitory, and preparatory to the advent of the Spirit. They have now led you to the new era when the Spirit of

* He who was God himself, or equal to him, needed to be perfected by being made for a time lower than the angels!

Digitized by Google

Truth has come to free the spirit from the letter in the Hebrew and Messianic Revelations, as well as in the records of the earthly missions of Jesus and the Apostles.

On account of the letter of the previous revelations, and the pure life, words, miracles, and Ascension of Jesus, Jesus came to be regarded as a mysterious being, and his origin and nature were looked upon as extra-human, but mysterious and veiled. Although the Apostle Paul asserted the human nature and origin of Jesus, according to the letter of the Hebrew Revelation, he likewise affirmed his origin and nature to be extra-human, and independent of any human origin, either as the son of Mary and Joseph, or as the son of the Virgin Mary alone; and implies the simply apparent nature of the miraculous birth of Jesus, though it was regarded as real by men. Paul thus asserts the extra-human nature and origin of Jesus, in accordance with the letter of the Hebrew Revelation, for the infinite wisdom and foresight of God provides daily bread for the men of every age, according to their faculties and necessities, and leads them on by successive and progressive revelations, as they are able to receive them, in the ways of light and truth.

It was God who formed the body of Jesus. The Son of God, entering into the world, says, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, but thou hast prepared me a body" (Heb. x. 5). And while saying that God formed a body for Jesus, Paul asserts him to be without father, mother or genealogy, like Melchisedec. "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, Priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom Abraham also gave a tenth part of all, first indeed being interpreted King of Righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is King of Peace; without father, mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually" (Heb. vii. 1–3.)

These words are veiled by the letter; but Paul asserts that Jesus appeared and accomplished his mission on earth clothed with a body which sprang from no human origin,

Digitized by Google

but which was formed by God. That is, it was formed according to immutable laws established from all eternity, but different from those which govern the formation of the body of man upon your planet.

Paul likewise asserts, under the veil of the letter, that the body of Jesus, which constituted his life to human eyes, but which was different to the body of the men of your planet, was not liable to human death, like yours, so that the death of Jesus, though real to human eyes, was simply apparent, like the human birth of Jesus. According to the spiritual meaning hidden under the letter, this Melchisedec who met Abraham, and who was without father, mother or genealogy, and was thus like Jesus, was a spiritual appearance, though visible and tangible. Hence the appearance and life of Jesus on earth was a spirit-manifestation, a visible and tangible apparition, or simply visible, according to the necessities and circumstances of his mission.

After saying that Jesus is a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. vi. 20; vii. 17), Paul adds that he is not established by the law of eternal succession, but by the power of his immortal life, which none could take from him; because, as he says, Jesus Christ is without father, mother, or genealogy, but God, who requires neither sacrifice nor oblation, has formed him a body. These expressions of Paul are an explicit consequence and application of the words of Jesus relative to the body which formed his apparent life, and which was the instrument and means of his earthly mission, and of all the events attending it." "I lay down my life to take it up again; no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again; this is the commandment which I have received of my Father." Paul adds that this body is the image of the substance of God, and likewise affirms, under the veil of the letter, that the appearance of Jesus upon earth was effected with a tangible fluidic body, similar to that of the men of your planet, but of a different nature. He thus correlated the finite with the infinite; the creature with the

Digitized by Google

Uncreated Creator, as the image of the substance of that God who is essentially Spirit, Intelligence, Thought and Fluid. The Universal Fluid flows from God as the instrument and means by which he executes all creations, both in the spiritual, material, and fluidic order, and rules over all which derives its origin from him.

Jesus is the reflection of the glory of God (Heb. i. 3). All flesh is not the same flesh—there are earthly bodies and bodies terrestrial: the first man is of the earth, earthly; the first man, Adam, was made a living soul;* the second man is the Lord from heaven; the last Adam was made a life-giving spirit (1 Cor. xv. 39, 40, 47, 45).

All the words of the Apostle Paul respecting the nature of the body of Jesus, were written for the future, and were not intended to be understood until the time when the New Revelation should explain them as natural phenomena taking place in accordance with the laws of nature.

Paul likewise asserts, also under the veil of the letter, the spiritual nature and origin of Jesus. He is the brother of men, and consequently a created spirit like them, having had the same origin as all the other creatures of God, who all proceed from the same principle, the Father, who is pure Spirit, and a Spirit perfect for ever. "God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil. iii.) "For both he that sanctifieth (Jesus Christ), and they who are sanctified (men), are all of one; wherefore he is not ashamed to call them brethren,† saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee." (Heb. ii. 11, 12.) "He is holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens" (which the Hebrews regarded as an integral part of the earth). "Who is perfected for ever." (Heb. vii. 26, 28.)

* The words contrasted in the Greek respectively denote the animal life and the immortal soul, and can hardly be rendered with precision in English.—TRANSL.

† The words quoted by Paul from Psalm xxii. 22, ought not to be isolated from those of Psalm lxxxii. 1 and 6, and when interpreted spiritually they attribute a common and divine origin to all created spirits, as sprung from the same principle.

Digitized by Google

Paul likewise asserts, the indivisible unity of the Father as the Only True God, and proclaims the spiritual position of Jesus as the constructor, protector, and ruler of the earth, entrusted with the development and progress of men, whom he is to lead to perfection; when, to use the figurative expression, God will be All in All.

"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Eph. iv. 6.) "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of those who rule, and the Lord of those who lord, who alone possesses immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be age-lasting honour and power" (1 Tim. vi. 15, 16). "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." (Eph. i. 17.) "For of him and through him and to him are all things." (Rom. xi. 36.) "For in him we live and move, and exist." (Acts xvii. 28.) "And that there is no other God but the One. For though there be that are called gods, both in heaven and on earth, as there are many gods, and many lords; but to us One God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (1 Cor. viii. 4–6.) "Christ, who is the Head." (Eph. iv. 15.) "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God." (1 Cor. xi. 3.) "For he must reign till he shall have put all enemies under his feet. Death is the last enemy that shall be destroyed. For he hath put all things under his feet; but when he said all things are put under him, it is obvious that he is excepted who did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then also shall the Son himself be subject unto him that did put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 25–28.)

These were words which were only to attract attention at a future period when they were to be explained by the New Revelation. But you know the object and necessity of the transitional period which was to be accomplished during the Christian era, under the influence of the letter,

Digitized by Google

and of mystery and miracle, that men might be led on to the new era of the advent of the Spirit which giveth life. With this object, the Apostle Paul spoke the following words under the guidance of inspiration, which were intended to be taken literally, according to the Hebrew revelation.

"Jesus Christ, the Son of God." (2 Cor. i. 19.) "The fathers, of whom Christ came, according to the flesh; who is above all; God be blessed in the ages." (Rom. ix. 5.) (Here read Heb. ch. i., in which Paul quotes from Ps. ii. 7; xcvi. 7; cii. 4; xliv. 6–7; ci. 25; cix. 1; 2 Kings xii. 14.)

When these words of Paul are explained spiritually, they should be read in connection with the passages quoted, with Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6, and with the words of Christ. These passages should not be isolated, and made to contradict each other according to the letter, but should all be brought together, harmonized, and explained in spirit and in truth. Paul's words always place Jesus before us as the Son of God; the Son of the Most High, according to the angel's words to Mary; the Son, like all others, of the One only eternal God, and the brother of men, sprung from the same origin as theirs; a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, the son of the God of the gods, in which sense he may be called your "God," the Founder, Protector, and Ruler of the earth; your Only Lord, who is above all. He is superior not only to men, but to all the angels or spirits who are the ambassadors or ministers of God around Jesus, and who fulfil his missions, but who are inferior in hierarchical order, and in universal knowledge.

These words of Paul were addressed to the Hebrews, who believed that there existed but one world, the earth. To them the earth was the only creation of God, and the heavens or the firmament were a necessary and integral portion of it, the vault of the earth. The heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars, were luminaries created and fixed in this vault for the earth alone, in order to divide day from night, to mark the times and seasons, and to enlighten your world. The sun was made to shine by day, the moon to shine by night; and the stars were made to shine over your

Digitized by Google

world, and to separate day from night, and light from darkness. (Gen. i.)

It was needful that the language of the Hebrew Revelation should be appropriated to these ideas, or it would not have been understood or listened to; and the Apostle Paul's words, extracted from the Psalms, should be read and interpreted in a similar sense.

God made Jesus the "heir of all things," as the founder, protector, and ruler of the world; and thus created "the ages" by him. Jesus made the earth, and as the Hebrews supposed, the heavens, as a necessary and integral portion of the earth.

"And, again, when he bringeth in the firstborn to the world, he saith, 'And let all the angels of God do obeisance to him.'" (Heb. i. 6.) When God appointed Jesus the ruler of the world, he placed the angels or spirits who were appointed to assist in the formation of the world, and its development and progress, under his direction. They were filled with submission, reverence and love towards him who was, like them, the Son of the Most High, and who, as the direct representative of the will of God, was himself "God above all," and superior to all the angels or spirits whom God sent to exercise their ministry, under the direction of Jesus, towards those who should be heirs of salvation; that is, towards all sincere and earnest men.

"Jesus is seated in the highest heaven, on the right hand of the Majesty on high." He occupies the first rank, and the place of honour, near God, as regards your earth.

"He is holy, innocent, and undefiled, and perfect for ever." That is, he is a pure spirit, having risen to perfection and holiness without ever having fallen; and having been appointed by God the ruler of your earth, he is truly (in comparison with the angels or spirits who work under his directions) the only Son of the Father by his purity and perfection; the head of all. It is thus that God is "his Father," and he is "his Son;" and that God, to whom there is neither past, present, nor future, but to whom all is instantaneously present through all eternity, has "begotten"

Digitized by Google

him "this day;" for he is the Son of the Most High, and the brother of men. God created him as a spirit, according to the immutable laws which he has established from all eternity, and which govern the creation of every spiritual essence. He "begot" him for his appearance on your earth, by forming him a body apart from your humanity, according to the laws which govern the formation of such bodies in the superior worlds, but appropriated to the surrounding fluids of your planet which serve for the formation of your being; and thus his body was similar to that of the inhabitants of the earth, though not of the same nature. Thus he was raised above the angels, having received a more excellent name than they, and was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.

"He has loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; his throne will be everlasting, and the sceptre of his rule shall be a sceptre of justice" for your planet, until he has raised it to the regions of pure fluids, when it will no longer be accessible or habitable to any but pure spirits; and afterwards for all the other planets which he will be appointed to protect and govern according to the superior missions with which he will be entrusted by God in space and eternity.

God made him sit on his right hand, "until he shall have made his enemies his footstool;" until all your vices, and moral, physical and intellectual imperfections shall have been destroyed; and until the spirits inhabiting or surrounding your earth shall have arrived at moral human perfection, and taken rank among the pure spirits. When that period arrives, the mission of Jesus as your protector and ruler will have ceased; and "then shall the Son himself be subject to God," to receive a new mission.

The heavens and the earth shall perish, but Jesus will remain. They shall all wax old like a garment, and Jesus shall change them like a vesture, and they shall be changed; but Jesus will always remain the same, and his years shall know no end. The earth and all things dependent in it, like all the worlds which have been or will be created, shall perish; for they will be purified and transformed; but

Digitized by Google

Jesus, who is perfect for ever, a pure spirit who has attained to the eternal life of the spirit, will always remain the same in his perfect purity.

When Paul spoke of Jesus, as "God above all," and also said that he was sprung from the fathers, according to the flesh, he did not intend to attribute divinity to him, nor to exalt him above the Father who is the only true God; or to represent him as participating in the divinity of the Father; or even as equal to God; for Paul also says, "To us there is but one God, the Father." The figurative expressions, "God above all," and "God, even thy God," were designed to express the idea that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, like all men, and all created spirits, and is their brother. But he is God, as the Son of the One Eternal God; Lord above all, as regards men, and superior to all the incarnate and errant spirits who labour at the development and progress of your planet and its humanity, under his directions. Consequently the words, "God above all," and similar expressions, refer to the power which God has conferred upon Jesus relative to your planet, and to your humanity, over whom he is the only Lord.

We must call your special attention to the words of Paul in 1 Cor. viii. 2, 4–6. They are of the greatest importance at present, for they form part of the foundation and anticipated sanction of the New Revelation. They condemn the ancient polytheism of the past, and the human interpretations of the present and future, which led to the transitory and preparatory ideas of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They condemn the human doctrines of the divinity of Christ and of the Three Persons, or the Trinity of the Catholics and orthodox Christians. These human doctrines are materialistic and literal interpretations of certain isolated passages in the Hebrew and Messianic Revelations, and in the words of Jesus; and represent Jesus as both man and a divided, though indivisible, portion of God, and equal to him. These human interpretations, combined with the influence of Hebrew ideas respecting the Holy Spirit, and the divinity attributed to Jesus, gave rise to the human

Digitized by Google

dogma of the Three Persons, which, nevertheless, sought to retain plurality in unity, without observing the Pantheistic character of this Trinity, which could only escape from Pantheism by falling into Tritheism; the plurality of Gods in the unity of God.*

Paul was not content to proclaim the undivided unity of the Father, as being God alone, one and indivisible; but he pursues the subject, and expressly condemns, the ascription of divinity to any but the Father (1 Cor. viii. 6). The words, "there are those who are called gods, both in heaven and on earth," refer to the divinity which human doctrines would attribute to Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine of the Three Persons, which united three distinct and impersonal Gods in one only. Paul alluded to the various contradictory expressions in the letter, that they might be useful for the transitional period which was to follow, and for the foundation of the future revelation of the Spirit, which was to be sanctioned beforehand by the labours of the Apostles, as well as by the earthly mission of Jesus. Paul speaks of those who are called gods "either on earth," by men, "or in heaven;" in space, by little-advanced spirits in the errant state; for when spirits return to the spiritual or fluidic state, they take with them their ideas and prejudices, which they retain for a longer or shorter time. Thus they retain their ideas respecting the divinity which men attribute to Jesus Christ, and respecting the Son and the Holy Spirit; whom they regard and worship as God himself.† Thus Jesus and the Holy Spirit are called Gods both in heaven and on earth.

There are also those who were and still are called gods, in heaven; that is in space. We speak of great spirits who are called gods, either by mistake, by ignorant spirits imbued with polytheistic ideas; or figuratively, according to the spiritual elevation of those who employ the term.

The meaning of Paul's words (1 Cor. viii. 2, 4 and 5),

* Compare vol. i. p. 158.

† Swedenborg, although strongly insisting on the deity of Christ, admits that the inhabitants of inferior worlds are permitted to worship the angel (or the society of angels) appointed to rule over them. "Earths in the Universe," § 130.—TRANS.

Digitized by Google

which were intended for future generations, is as follows, when the spirit is freed from the letter:—

"We know that all the false gods of the ancient polytheism are nothing in the world: and that there is no other God but God alone. For although there are those who are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (the Son and the Holy Spirit), as there be many gods and many lords, nevertheless, to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him: and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him:" for he is the founder, protector and ruler of the earth, who is alone entrusted with our development and progress, and is alone appointed to lead us to perfection. He is our only Lord, relatively to us and to our world, for he is our only teacher and master; our King, and the first minister of God. At the same time, Jesus Christ is the brother of men, like all creatures and spiritual essences, and sprung from the same origin: the Son of the Most High: and God himself, as being the Son of God, the Uncreated Creator.

Thus the night which surrounds you in consequence of the darkness of the letters and of human interpretations, disappears before the dawning light of the Spirit. In truth, there is no other God but God alone, the Father, who is supremely happy, who alone is powerful, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, and whom no man hath seen or can see.

Thus, the Son is not God; but he is your only Lord, relatively to your planet and its humanity; but he is also your brother.

The Holy Spirit is not God, for this figurative expression denotes the sacred phalanx of the pure, superior and good spirits, who receive inspiration either immediately or mediately, and who are the servants, ministers and agents of God in the order of the hierarchy and of their spiritual elevation. They are the agents of his providence, who accomplish his wishes and carry out his arrangements for progress in universal life and harmony; and they are his special ministers to you, relatively to your earth. They bring you his inspirations

Digitized by Google

and providence, and thus God descends to you, by the Holy Spirit, through their missions.

I myself, John the Evangelist, when incarnate, personally shared the human opinions of the other disciples and the multitude respecting the divinity of Jesus Christ. But in what I write as an Apostle and Evangelist, I was, like others, the instrument of the will of the Lord, under the inspiration (though unconsciously to myself) of the superior spirits who aided and guided me in the accomplishment of my mission. The Gospel which I wrote at the time appointed, within the limits marked out by medianimic influence, was intended, like the earthly missions of Jesus and Paul, to aid in the work of transition, and to lay the foundations, and from the anticipated sanction of the Spirit of Truth. When what I write under the veil of the letter is taken as a whole, and explained in accordance with the Spirit which giveth life, it is in luminous harmony with the narratives of the three other Evangelists respecting the earthly mission of Jesus, the spiritual origin and nature of our beloved Master, his spiritual position as regards God and your planet, and the extra-human nature of the body which he assumed for his appearance on the earth.

As the Apostle Paul says, the letter killeth and the Spirit giveth life. I myself, under the inspiration which guided me, recorded the words spoken by Jesus: "It is the Spirit which giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words which I speak unto you are spirit and life."

When I wrote "The Word was God," I did not know the exact sense and meaning attached to the expression by inspiration. Thus I wrote words under inspiration, like the Apostle Paul, which, when taken literally, bear opposite and contradictory meanings; but which, when understood and explained in spirit and in truth, then, and then only, stand forth in luminous harmony. Therefore despise the letter, for although I wrote that "The Word was God," and that men had seen the Word, and that he had dwelt among them, I also wrote, "No man has ever seen God."

Under the influence of inspiration, everything is linked

Digitized by Google

together in the missions of the Apostles, that the transitional period under the reign of the letter, and the influence of mystery and miracle, should take its course under the combined influences of the revelation of the angel, and the earthly mission of Jesus. Besides this, it was designed to prepare for, and lay the foundations of, the future revelation of the Spirit of Truth, when men were able and ready to receive it, when the Spirit should be freed from the letter, and when the apparently miraculous was explained according to the immutable laws of nature. What has been was to be, and has taken place as the condition and mode of human progress; and what is to be must now be accomplished.

(Verse 1.) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Every spiritual essence proceeds from God, the Creative Spirit. Thus, the Word, as Jesus is called, was with God, like every other spirit, from all eternity. He was God in the sense that all created spirits are Gods, and all Sons of the Most High, as possessed of a common divine origin, as regards their spiritual essence. But the distinction which places Jesus apart as possessed of an exceptional origin, is due to his never having fallen, nor alienated himself from this essence, having preserved the purity which was the type of his divine origin.

The word "Logos" denotes the Cause, or the Being. The Cause refers to the act which drew your planet from chaos; that is, from the mass of fluids which God had prepared to form the materials of your globe, and which contained the spiritual essences destined to become its living inhabitants, and the elements of which your planet is composed. "The Being" refers to the personality of Jesus (always distinct from that of God, the One Indivisible Creator), the direct instrument of God, who thus upholds everything by the power of his Word. This personality was placed before your eyes materially, at the time of the earthly mission of the Master. You know that Jesus is not the *only* Word of God. All the founders of the planets are

Digitized by Google

spirits of perfect and immaculate purity, who have preserved their original purity, and have attained to sidereal perfection without ever having fallen; and all these, like Jesus, are "Words of God."

You may also apply the term Words of God (no longer in the spiritual sense, but in the more general acceptation of the term) to those messengers of God who are purified spirits, able to approach the Fire of Omnipotence. They are the direct messengers of the Omnipotent Lord in the missions which they accomplish under the direction of the spirits who are the founders, rulers, and protectors of the planets. Refer to what has already been told you (vol. i. pp. 138–141, § 60) respecting the rulers of the planets, and remember that no one can or ought to try to penetrate the future. Content yourselves with fixing your attention on that which is revealed to you.

The Word was with God, and he was God in the sense that he possessed in himself the divine spark which had formed him, without ever having lost his original purity. You should despise the letter, and we cannot too often remind you that Paul and John assert that no man has ever seen nor can see God. But men have seen Jesus Christ, and he has dwelt among them; and if, as men suppose, Jesus was a separate, though indivisible portion of God, and equal to him, he would be as great as God. But Jesus said, "My Father is greater than I;" and when he quoted Psalm lxxxii. 1–6, in answer to the Jews who were about to stone him, because they accused him of making himself equal to God, he declared himself to be a spirit created by the One, Sole, Eternal God, and consequently the brother of men; and a creature, like them, of the One, Omnipotent Creator, who alone is God.

(Verses 2 & 3.) "He was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made which was made."

The words "in the beginning" relate here to the creation of your planet. God creates the universes, and consequently the materials which compose them. But the pure

Digitized by Google

spirits, the protectors of the planets, gather these materials together to form the worlds in which you dwell. God is the Creator, and the Messiahs are his first ministers. Thus, Jesus was with God at the time of the creation of your planet, for he acted under the inspiration and by the will of the Father; and thus all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. Everything needful for the formation of your globe was formed under his directions by the spirits who aided him in his work, and was thus made by him.

You must not regard Jesus as a creative Power, for if you assign such power to him, you will multiply your gods. But you must look upon Jesus, like all those entrusted with similar missions, as only a minister. This is the position occupied by these spirits in the eternal kingdom of the Omnipotent Lord, without whose will they can do nothing. This is the reason that God, who is One, Alone, and Indivisible, permits you to render to his Messiah the homage which is due to him.

(Verse 4.) "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

He had power to form your world, which is the centre of life; and it was given to him to lead and enlighten the human and spiritual existences which he was to aid in developing. The mission of Jesus was not limited to guiding your earthly bodies; but it extends more especially to your spirits; and we all remain under his benignant rule, until our own lights are sufficient for us. It is he who enlightens us; and he is our beacon and our refuge.

(Verse 5.) "And the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not."

This alludes to the ignorance which held men in bondage, and hindered them from understanding the ways of salvation in God. It alludes to all the efforts made to enable men to understand their destiny more readily, and to open their eyes to the light. These words refer chiefly to the earthly mission of Jesus, but you may apply them generally

Digitized by Google

to all attempts at reform; for the revelation of God is permanent and progressive.

(Verses 6 & 7.) "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe."

These words are explained by the mission of John. Human spirits needed to be prepared for the event which was to change the moral face of the world. You are told, "that all might believe through him." This is not yet the case, but is not the mission of John continued in the Gospels, in the sense that whoever hears or reads them, finds them to contain the preparatory mission of John; and does not the Forerunner always call men to repentance?

But the mission of John is not yet finished. Did not Jesus say, "He has come already"? And he must come again; and his mighty hand must again open the door through which shall pass the Spirit of Truth; Jesus as the completion and sanction of the Truth.

(Verse 8.) "He was not that Light, but he came to bear witness to that Light."

We tell you the same to-day. When he shall again descend among men, he himself will not be the Truth, but will bear witness to the Truth.

(Verse 9.) "That was the true Light, which enlighteneth every man who cometh into the world."

This alludes to the mission of Jesus, and to the empire which he exerts over your planet. Is not the protector and organiser of your planet he who watches more especially over the development of all things, and especially over your intelligence? Is he not the intelligent and devoted Governor who selects enlightened professors fitted to teach every class of the children whom the Great Father has entrusted to his care?

(Verse 10.) "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."

This means, He existed before the world, and men were not at first able to understand either the task which was

Digitized by Google

assigned to him, or the benefits which they would derive from it. They did not know him, for they had not seen him; and material spirits require something which touches and impinges upon matter.

The expression, "knew him not," alludes to the disposition of the minds of men before his earthly mission, and even afterwards. Have men known him since he dwelt among you? and have those who have professed to believe in him, followed in his steps? Even to-day, how many are there among you who can say, "I know Jesus?"

(Verse 11.) "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

Those do not receive Jesus who do not keep his commandments.

(Verses 12 & 13.) "But to as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Those who obey his commands are the children of God. But do you suppose that men believe in his name when they are false to his teachings? He who believes in his name, walks in his ways, because he trusts in his promises; and he who walks in his paths without turning aside, takes up his cross, forgives his enemies, and empties the cup of suffering without answering those who have poured it out for him, and thus becomes a child of God.

Those who have power to become the children of God are those who follow the steps of Jesus, whether he walks along the smiling banks of the Jordan; or whether he hangs on the cross. But these are not born of blood, nor held in the bonds of the flesh. What is that which is able to raise itself, to understand, and to perfect itself? Is it your body, or your spirit? Is your spirit born of the flesh or the spirit? Has it a material or a spiritual origin? Its origin is spiritual, and the more it purifies itself, the higher it rises, and the more it slackens the bonds which chain it to matter.

Verses 12 and 13 may be applied to all who have received

Digitized by Google

Jesus, not only during and after his earthly mission, but before, and without knowing him, but who have practised the love of God and the neighbour, which the Ruler of your planet has proclaimed to include all the Law and the Prophets. Those who thus practise justice, love and charity, with gentleness, humility, and disinterestedness, in the sincerity of their hearts—these are and have been the children of God.*

(Verse 14.) "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The spirit assumed a body visible to human eyes, and men beheld his actions and were able to appreciate them, and were thus led to understand that no creature like themselves could follow his steps without failing; and they were obliged to confess that he who could perform such actions must come from God. Jesus assumed a relatively material envelope; a real, but relatively fleshly body, for, as Paul says (1 Cor. xv. 39–41, 44, 45, 47), speaking words intended for the future, and the exact sense of which he did not understand, "All flesh is not the same flesh." Even as, "all flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds," so also is it with your flesh, and that of the inhabitants of higher worlds. Just as there are "bodies terrestrial," so also are there "bodies celestial." Just as the terrestrial man possesses an animal body, subject to corruption, and constructed according to the natural laws of

* Justin Martyr, whom the Roman Church numbers among her saints, expresses himself thus in his Second Apology for the Christians: "All those who have lived in a manner conformable to reason, and to the Word, are Christians, although not attached to any particular religion. Such men, among the Greeks, were Socrates and Heraclitus, and among the barbarians, Abraham, Ananias, Azarias, Misael, Elias, and many others whose names and actions would take too long to repeat. Similarly, those among the ancients who lived before Jesus Christ, and did not live according to reason and to the Word, have been the "enemies" of Jesus Christ, and have persecuted those who lived a good life in accordance with reason and the Word. But those who have lived, and are still living now, according to reason and the Word are Christians; they are above all fear, and are not troubled at anything."

Digitized by Google

your planet; and a spiritual body, which you call the perisprit, which is incorruptible, and which is the fluidic organ of the soul or spirit; so also the celestial man possesses a celestial body, not subject to corruption, fluidic in its nature, and formed, not by the combination of matter, but according to the natural laws which regulate higher worlds; and, as already explained (vol. i. p. 23), by fluidic attraction, which effects the incarnation, or, more correctly, the incorporation.

Relatively to the essence of Jesus, the perispritic body which he assumed was flesh. It was real flesh, like that of any other man; that is, it was material to human eyes, in accordance with the idea which men were to form of it. It was from this point of view, which men were to retain until the New Revelation should explain the Master's appearance on your earth, that John wrote (2 John 7), "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-Christ."

(Verses 15, 16.) "John bore witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me, and of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace."

These verses confirm what we have told you about the origin of Christ, and his relations towards your planet.

(Verse 17). "For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Moses issued his commands to men, as imperious orders which they were forced to obey. Jesus came to explain the reason of the commandments to men, and brought them grace by showing them the Eternal Father, who is always ready to forgive a repentant sinner. He brought them truth by teaching them the object of their existence on earth, and the reward for which they laboured. The veil which intentionally covered his words, is now raised by the New Revelation, which shows you grace and truth from both points of view.

Digitized by Google

(Verse 18.) "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

You cannot see God without arriving at a degree of purity which only the Messiahs, and the greatest spirits, can approach. But these verses contain a special meaning. There has never been any personal manifestation of God among men. Your degree of elevation, or in other words, your state of moral and intellectual inferiority and material incarnation should make you understand this; and those disembodied spirits who speak to you of "God," and of the splendour of the regions where he dwells, either speak figuratively to incite your ardour, or in error, having mistaken the great spirits whom they are able to approach, for a vision or personification of the Most High. We say, figuratively; or, if you prefer it, by hearsay. They understand the splendours which surround the Master of the Universe; they feel them, and desire to inspire you with the same ardent desire of progress which they themselves feel, in order to penetrate to the Fire of all life.

None can see God, but the spirit who has arrived at the state of perfect purity, and become a pure spirit. To see God is to approach the unveiled Fire of Omnipotence. To see God is to comprehend his essence, and to be able directly, without an intermediary, to receive the action of his will, to transmit it by degrees of purity, down to your level, or even lower. The words "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father," are figurative expresssions specifying the elevation of Jesus in reference to your planet and its humanity, and to the spirits who work at your development and progress under his directions. It is a way of expressing the relations which exist between God and his messenger.

Digitized by Google

VERSES 19–28.

Testimony of John to himself and to Jesus.

(19) And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou? (20) And he confessed, and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ. (21) And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. (22) Then they said to him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? (23) He said, I am a voice of one crying in the desert, Make straight the way of the Lord; as Isaiah the prophet said. (24) And those who were sent were of the Pharisees. (25) And they asked him, and said to him, Why baptisest thou then, if thou art neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet? (26) John answered them, saying, I baptise with water, but there standeth one in the midst of you whom you do not know. (27) He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me. I am not worthy to unloose the thong of his sandal. (28) These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptising.

§ 2. You have already received explanations on this subject (vol. i. pp. 92, 93, § 53), to which we refer you. The only point which we need stop to consider is the denial of John that he was Elijah. The question proves that the Jews expected to see Elijah live amongst them again, by means of a new incarnation; and John's answer shows that, like most other men, he did not remember his previous incarnations; for this recollection would have led to complications apart from the course which events were intended to follow.

Although most men forget their previous existences, this memory may be awakened in rare and exceptional cases. It has then some object directed, either to the necessities of the present life, or as a trial, by the vague ideas and regrets to which it gives rise, or by the fear which it sometimes inspires; while, in some cases, it is an evident proof, by which the incarnate spirit is predisposed to accept the new doctrine; or for others who hear and believe. In such cases, the recollection is generally produced when spirits are disengaged by sleep, by a spiritual communication received from the guardian angel, and the waking remembrance of which is preserved by his influence. Sometimes this recollection is produced in the waking state, by the inspirations of surrounding spirits.

Digitized by Google

The baptism of water (v. 26) has also been explained to you in the commentary on the three first Gospels. Immersion was regarded in all ages as a mode of purification; hence John, while preparing the way for him who was to follow, poured over his disciples the water which typified repentance. But John the Forerunner was to announce the coming of the expected one, who was to baptize with the Spirit, by reversing the empire of matter. John was aware of his own inferiority as compared with him whom he knew to be sent on a superior mission, and who occupied an exceptional position towards the Father.

VERSES 29–34.

The Lamb of God.

(29) On the next day, John seeth Jesus coming to him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. (30) This is he of whom I said, A man cometh after me who is preferred before me; for he was before me. (31) And I knew him not, but that he should manifest himself to Israel; on this account I came baptising in water. (32) And John bore testimony, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and resting upon him. (33) And I knew him not, but he who sent me to baptise with water, the same said to me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, this is he who baptiseth with the Holy Spirit. (34) And I have seen, and borne testimony that this is the Son of God.

§ 3. Jesus was compared to a lamb, in accordance with Hebrew customs. The lamb without blemish was the sacrifice of propitiation, and therefore John announced beforehand, in language appropriate to the intelligence of his hearers, that there would be a solemn sacrifice for the redemption of mankind. Was not the apparent death of Jesus the appointed method, and the lever which was to prepare for human regeneration, to lead you to the advent of the Spirit of Truth? Remember that there is nearly always a material side which can impress the senses of men, co-existing with the spiritual sense which is intended to be interpreted at a later period.

"He who sent me, said to me" (v. 34). While John was incarnate, he was imbued with the traditions of the period. He was not only a seeing and inspired, but a hearing

Digitized by Google

medium; and he supposed the superior spirits who spoke to him in the name of God, to be God himself*; for every manifestation which has been supposed to come from God himself, is thus produced among men. You must understand "He who sent me" to refer to the spirits who guided John; for you are aware that God never communicates directly with men.

While John was incarnate, he had lost the remembrance of what Jesus was; and Jesus appeared to him, as well as to others, to be a man like himself. But he also looked upon him as the Son of God; a messenger whose elevation and mission were far superior to his own, but which he could not exactly explain; for within the scope and limits of his mission, he was the instrument of the superior spirits who were appointed to direct his words and actions, that he should speak and act as his mission required.

You have already received sufficient explanations respecting the other verses (vol. i. pp. 89–103, § § 51–54).

VERSES 35–43.

The First Disciples.

(35) Again the next day John was standing, and two of his disciples. (36) And looking upon Jesus walking, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. (37) And the two disciples heard him speaking, and they followed Jesus. (38) And Jesus turning round, and seeing them following, saith to them, What seek ye? (39) And they said to him, Rabbi, which means, when translated, Teacher, where dwellest thou? (40) He saith to them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and remained with him that day; and it was about the tenth hour. (41) Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John speak, and followed him. (42) He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith to him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. (43) And Jesus looking upon him, said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, being interpreted, a stone.

§ 4. These verses require no explanation. The term Cephas, or stone, alludes to Peter's earthly and spiritual mission, as the corner-stone of the Church of Christ (vol. ii. pp. 106–123, § 184).

* As in the case of Swedenborg, and others.—TRANS.

Digitized by Google

VERSES 44–52.

Philip and Nathanael.

(44) On the next day, Jesus wished to go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith to him, Follow me. (45) And Philip was from Bethsaida, from the city of Andrew and Peter. (46) Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith to him, We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. (47) And Nathanael said to him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. (48) Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. (49) Nathanael saith to him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said to him, Before Philip called thee, while thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. (50) Nathanael answered and saith to him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. (51) Jesus answered and said to him, Because I said to thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, dost thou believe? thou shalt see greater things than these. (52) And he saith to him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter you shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

§ 5. Nathanael believed because Jesus saw him when he was concealed from all human eyes. Every incarnate spirit, who is gifted with what is called second sight, requires assistance before he can see. He must be aided by his guides, and placed under the influence of spirit-magnetism, which does not always produce sleep, but which develops the spiritual faculties. Jesus, who was superior to all the spirits around him, and who had never been subjected to human incarnation, saw at a distance, far beyond what human vision could perceive; for he was clothed with a perispritic body, and was always a spirit, though visibly incarnate to the eyes of men. He thus preserved his spiritual sight under this human appearance, and the perfect knowledge of his origin, as well as the independence of his spiritual nature and faculties. His words to Nathanael (v. 52) were figurative. Certainly the exceptional life of Jesus, and the dangers which he seemed to men to escape from miraculously, might have made them believe in the intervention of angels. But their intervention was not protection, but obedience and assistance, for Jesus was always surrounded by superior spirits ready to obey his commands.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.—VERSES 1–11.

Marriage of Cana.

(1) And on the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. (2) And Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the marriage. (3) And when they ran short of wine, the mother of Jesus saith to him, They have no wine. (4) Jesus saith to her, Woman, what is that to thee and me? my hour has not yet come. (5) His mother saith to the servants, Whatever he saith unto you, do it. (6) And there were six stone waterpots according to the purification of the Jews, each containing two or three measures. (7) Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water; and they filled them up to the brim. (8) And he saith to them, Draw out now, and bear to the governor of the feast. And they bore it. (9) And when the governor of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants who drew the water knew), the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, (10) And says to him, Every man sets out the good wine first, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but you have kept the good wine till now. (11) Jesus wrought this first beginning of signs in Cana of Galilee, and displayed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

§ 6. You know enough of magnetic effects in general to understand the nature of this event, which is called a miracle, though perfectly natural. Jesus possessed great power over the fluids; and it was by magnetic agency that the water assumed the flavour of wine, which Jesus conferred upon it; but it was not changed into wine, as was commonly reported by those who were ignorant of the nature of the occurrence. Do not wonder that water which had thus acquired the flavour of wine by magnetism, was actually mistaken for wine; or that those who were ignorant of the cause should have spread the report that a miracle had been wrought, and that water had really been changed into wine. When Jesus was asked to make the change, the feast was drawing to a close, and the day was declining. The waterpots from which the servants drew were stone amphoræ, and the master of the feast tasted the liquid brought to him from one of these, and it was handed round the table in jars of nearly the same shape and material. Are you not aware of the effect produced in men by magnetism, whether human or spiritual?

As regards the magnetic action which Jesus exerted from

Digitized by Google

a distance upon all the guests, you may reflect that a powerful human magnetizer can act from a very great distance, as it appears to men, upon a suitable subject. Jesus possessed this power in a supreme degree; and even if his own power was insufficient to act on all the guests (which is a gratuitously false assumption), the superior spirits who surrounded him in incalculable numbers, and who were always ready to obey his will, would have strengthened his magnetic power, and would have exerted their own to prepare the subjects to receive his influence; but this was needless.

This is what you often see when a medium falls asleep without a magnetiser approaching him. In the present case, when the flavour of wine had been given to the water, spirit-magnetism was exerted on the mind, and this prepared the way for the belief which was intended.

Jesus has been accused of taking part in a drunken feast, and providing the materials; but those who speak thus forget that the Orientals have always been noted for sobriety. The feast was almost over, and although the guests had drunk much, they had only made a joyous repast, without drunkenness or revelry.

Although I myself, John the Evangelist, spoke of the water as changed into wine, it was because I knew no more of the causes of the event than others, and related the fact as it was currently reported, without seeking for an explanation which it was both useless and undesirable for me to give; and I was thus left to my own personal impressions, in this as in similar cases.

When Jesus answered Mary, he had not yet worked a "miracle," and reminded her that she should not have asked for one under the circumstances, as the time had not yet come for him to commence his public mission. These words were not spoken to Mary personally, but were intended for those among whom he was seated. For when Mary asked for a miracle by saying to Jesus, "They have no wine," and told the servants to obey his orders, she spoke under unconscious spiritual inspiration. This manifestation

Digitized by Google

was intended to prepare the way for Jesus by bringing him into notice.

The words addressed by the ruler of the feast to the bridegroom (v. 10) merely allude to the customs of the period.

This event was a preparatory work on the part of Jesus. You may conclude from the ruler's words that Jesus gave the guests a perfect beverage in place of the inferior liquor which they had previously been drinking.

§ 7. It has been said that Jesus, his mother and disciples, were invited to a wedding; and that wine ran short at the end of the feast. When the guests were drunk, Jesus had the stone jars, each holding two or three large measures, filled with water, which he changed into wine. It has been calculated that these eighteen measures were enough to intoxicate all the little town of Cana. The miracles of Jesus had generally some useful end or moral signification; but where was the utility or morality of changing water into wine for people who had already drunk too much? Though Jesus informs us that the Jews called him gluttonous and a wine-bibber (Matth. ii. 19), we know him to have been a pattern of temperance, and if he had performed a miracle, it would have been more natural for him to change wine into water, and thus to have given the intemperate guests a lesson of sobriety.

You will find the answer to this criticism in what we have already said. These observations would not have been made, if it had been known that although Jesus gave the water the flavour of wine by magnetic action, he did not communicate any alcoholic principle to it.

As for the moral question, you have been told that the event was preparatory, and produced a much stronger impression on the minds of men because it appealed to their material senses. It confirmed the faith of the disciples who were present at the wedding, and who were only just beginning to assemble round Jesus (v. 11). There was no miracle, in the sense of a derogation from the laws of nature. It was a natural event, which was supposed to be a miracle from ignorance of the causes which produced it; and was taken for a real change of water into wine. As for the stone waterpots, Jesus said, "Fill the vessels with water." The servants filled them as full as they could, out of derision, expecting some mystification. But it was only the water which was handed to the ruler, and distributed among the

Digitized by Google

guests, upon which Jesus conferred the flavour of wine; for this was all that was necessary. You are not told that the ruler examined the water in the vessels after the feast was over, and the guests had left. It was perceived that the water remained in its natural state, and it was thrown away, and no more was thought about the matter. If this fact had been reported to the crowd, who knew nothing of the cause, it would only have been one more "miracle." The water was first changed to wine, and then the wine was changed back into water. Their ignorance, which led to incredulity on the part of those who had not witnessed the fact, and could not explain the phenomenon, led the guests at Cana to suppose that the water had really been changed into wine. The fact appealed to their material senses, and they could not explain or understand it otherwise than by supposing that it was a miracle.

VERSES 12–25.

Jesus in the Temple.

(12) After this, he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother and his brethren, and his disciples, but they did not remain there many days. (13) And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. (14) And he found in the Temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves; and the money-changers sitting. (15) And he made a scourge of small cords, and drove them all out of the Temple, both the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the money of the money-changers, and upset the tables. (16) And said to those who sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandize. (17) And his disciples remembered that it is written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. (18) Then the Jews answered and said to him, What sign showest thou to us, that thou doest these things? (19) And Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. (20) Then the Jews said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? (21) But he said this concerning the temple of his body. (22) Therefore when he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this to them, and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus said. (23) And while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, on the feast-day, many believed in his name, when they saw his signs which he wrought. (24) But Jesus did not trust himself to them, because he knew all. (25) And needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.

§ 8. The Evangelists adhered to no chronological order, but confined themselves to recording the events which they

Digitized by Google

had seen and heard. These verses do not all relate to the same event, but are connected together, so as to give a summary of the events which took place.

In one sense the Gospel of John is linked with the other three, since they mutually complete each other, for although John omits some events of which the others have spoken, he mentions others which they have not recorded.

We have given you full explanations respecting the traders being driven from the Temple at vol ii. pp. 267–272, § 244.

You will observe that the words of Jesus (v. 20) refer to his resurrection; and John speaks (v. 25) of events witnessed by the apostles and disciples, as well as by himself.

Compare these with other words of the Master in which he alludes to his "death;" the disappearance of the body from the sealed tomb; his resurrection; and his disappearance during his public mission whenever he was absent from the gaze of men (John x. 17, 18; viii. 23; vi. 38; iii. 13), and you will then see that the words, "He needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man," bring out in strong relief the extra-human origin of Jesus, who was always a spirit, and clearly read the thoughts of man, and penetrated their intentions. He suffered real death to human eyes; but his death was simply apparent; and, at the time of his resurrection, he resumed his perispritic, and apparently human body.

CHAPTER III.—Verses 1–21.

Interview with Nicodemus.

(1) And there was a man among the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. (2) This man came to Jesus by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God, for no man can perform the signs which thou doest, unless God be with him. (3) Jesus answered and said to him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (4) Nicodemus saith to him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? (5) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (6) That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that

Digitized by Google

which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. (7) Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (8) The Spirit breathes where it will, and you hear the sound of it, but you know not whence it comes or whither it goeth, so is every man who is born of the Spirit. (9) Nicodemus answered and said to him, How can these things be? (10) Jesus answered and said to him, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things? (11) Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak what we know, and bear witness to what we have have seen, and you receive not our testimony. (12) If I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things? (13) And no one hath ascended up into heaven but he who came down from heaven; the Son of Man who is in heaven. (14) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so also must the Son of Man be lifted up. (15) That every man who believeth in him should not perish, but should have age-lasting life. (16) For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that every man who believeth on him should not perish, but should have age-lasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. (18) He who believeth in him is not condemned, but he who believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. (19) And this is the condemnation, that light came into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20) For every man that doeth evil hateth the light, and doth not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed. (21) But he who doeth truth, cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

§ 9. You know that the question of Nicodemus and the answer of Jesus are confirmatory of reincarnation, to which Jesus desired to call the attention of men. You have already perceived it shining through the veil of the letter, in his words and teachings recorded by the first three Evangelists, and which we have already explained. The words of Jesus imply that if man does not recommence his life until he has attained the limit assigned to it, which is perfection, he will not enter into the kingdom of God; that is, into the pure and radiant existence which is the true life of the spirit. We must give you needful explanations respecting each separate idea.

(V. 1–3.) Nicodemus was conscious of the mission of Jesus. So also were the rulers of the synagogue; but their pride and self-interest caused them to act towards Jesus as they had often before acted towards the prophets.

Nicodemus understood the Hebrew interpretations of the prophecies respecting the Messiah to imply that he would be a humble and simple man, who wrought miracles which could only be effected by the hand of God. But his false

Digitized by Google

shame and fear of being talked about were so strong, that he dared not openly enter the humble dwelling of the carpenter's son. The fear of ridicule barred the way; and Jesus read his heart, and said, "Man must be born again."

The Master's reply was specially addressed to Nicodemus, and equally applies to all those who are afraid to acknowledge their thoughts and opinions, however honourable or holy they may be. As regards Nicodemus, these words signify, Man must lay aside his worn-out body, composed of prejudices, selfishness, ignorance, and vile passions, to be born again, free, pure, and fitted for progress. He must be innocent in the eyes of God as the new-born child is innocent in its mother's eyes; he must be pure as the child presented in the Temple is pure; he must be holy as the child consecrated to God is holy.

Verse 3 is an affirmation of the natural law of rebirth, of reincarnation, and of the necessity of living again, which is the only means of purification and progress for the spirit to attain to perfection, and thus to enter into the kingdom of the heavens. The Master's thought was only to be fully understood by future generations, when the promised spiritual revelation should reveal the principle, object, and consequences of this great law. He who does not cast away the cloak of imposture and iniquity which covers him, to assume the pure white robe of the Levite, will not enter into the kingdom of the heavens; for none can enter without the wedding garment of the parable.

But it is not enough for the spirit to cast its robe of flesh away before appearing before its Judge. Is it sufficient to lay aside the body, that all the vices and imperfections to which it has ministered may be buried with it? By no means; just as the body cannot originate vices and imperfections, but is only a passive instrument moved by the spirit, so the spirit does not lay aside all the burdens which it has brought upon itself. When the spirit assumes a body, it takes with it all the good and evil principles which it carries in itself; and the body merely aids in their development.

Digitized by Google

The spirit directs the instrument which he uses; but it is for him to use it and to direct it rightly. If the spirit leaves the body, the latter is only a mass of corruption, incapable of any movement. If the workman lays aside the instrument which he uses, it falls to the ground and rots. But the Master of the workman requires an account of the work, not from the instrument, but from him who has made use of it. He desires to know what work has been done; and if it has been done badly, he says to the workman, "You must begin again, but the instrument which you employed is worn out. Here is another; take it, and try to use it better, for the work must be done, and done perfectly; find out for yourself what has misled your eye and hand; cast aside everything which might turn you from your course; and when you show me that the work is done, you shall receive the reward promised to the diligent labourer."

Say, beloved ones, whether this natural doctrine is not more consolatory and encouraging than the human doctrines taught by the Church? The Church teaches the doctrine of eternal torments for the guilty spirit, a doctrine equally false and monstrous, but which, nevertheless, has had its use, though it has now run its course, and only gives rise to incredulity. The Church teaches the doctrine of a Purgatory, which is vague, obscure, and false, offering you expiation through its torture, but giving no information of the manner in which the guilty spirit who leaves your earth can obtain the means of reparation and purification which will lead him to that moral and intellectual perfection of purity and knowledge which alone will permit him to enter the kingdom of the heavens.

When the penalty of death is executed on the pilferer as well as the murderer, what does it matter to a man who feels himself condemned already, whether he commits one crime more or less? He would have no confidence in the compassion of the judges, or in the promises of the guards. If he had failed, he would continue to fail; you could not expect it to be otherwise.

Is not the idea of reincarnation, and the opportunity of

Digitized by Google

recommencing a task which has been badly performed, more encouraging to him who has led a reprehensible life, and who sees with anguish the moment of his departure drawing near? If he is void of faith he waits for annihilation to engulph him; or else his recollections of childhood lead him to ask if there is a God; and he beholds a sword raised over his head to strike him, as the only answer.

Is not the thought that an unfinished labour may yet be completed, sweet to the mind of a man who is animated by a great and generous idea, and who dreams of the progress of his brethren and of humanity, and feels great possibilities springing up in his mind, but perceives blind and pitiless death about to remove him from the scene of his labours? Remember that when man looks forward only to an eternal life of contemplation, the death of the body means the paralysis of the soul. When the soul is separated from its envelope, it is no longer a being, but becomes an abstraction which no longer regards the struggles of the past, and the course of progress, and hopes for absolutely nothing beyond in the future, unless, indeed, some inattention to the laws of the Church condemns the poor wandering soul to the torments of purgatory. Is not the doctrine of rebirth, or reincarnation more consoling than this on the approach of death? He who has failed in his work, or in his trials, may say, "I have failed indeed; but my Father, God Almighty, will permit me, in his infinite justice, goodness and mercy, to recommence the task which I have performed so ill. It is true that I must expiate my faults after death in the errant state by moral sufferings proportioned to my misdeeds, aggravated by the remorse arising from a guilty conscience. But when I am repentant and submissive, and ardently desire reparation and progress, I will ask the favour of a new birth, to recommence the task which I have performed badly, and God, my Father, whose mercies are inexhaustible, will grant it me. After I have experienced the moral fire of expiation, I shall recommence my task by means of reincarnation, with the aid of new experiences."

He who has left a task unfinished, which he had under-

Digitized by Google

taken for the happiness of his brethren and the progress of humanity, may say, "Doubtless I had undertaken great things; and perhaps humanity might have profited by my labours and genius. It may be, however, that these projects were sullied by some leaven of worldly pride which my provident and tender Father desired to extinguish at its origin. Perhaps the plans which I had formed, and the enterprises which I desired to undertake, required something to bring them to maturity which I was still unable to supply. Then let me go to my indulgent and infallible Master, to study what I am still ignorant of, and to perfect myself in what I know. I shall return stronger and younger in body, and more intelligent and better fitted to finish the task which I had undertaken. Death is welcome, for it will restore my youth, strength, benevolence, and knowledge."

Is not this a sweeter idea than the old doctrine that everything is over at death?

(V. 4, 5.)—Although Nicodemus was an intelligent man desirous of instruction, yet he was imbued with the ideas of his age, as you are with the ideas of your own; and he was unable to understand the purport of the words of Jesus. He dreaded ridicule and sarcasm; he was afraid to confess his belief openly, and his failure to take the first step darkened his intelligence. Nevertheless he played with the words, for his conscience made him understand the sense which Jesus put upon them; and therefore Christ contented himself with reaffirming them (v. 5).

Christ has told you, "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke xvii. 21). It is in the midst of you, and you know not how to discover it. Man bears within himself the kingdom of God, because he finds the means of attaining it in the exercise of his own faculties. But he can only hope to attain it gradually, from progress to progress, and from ascent to ascent. The kingdom of God is not a circumscribed locality, as men have supposed; it is not a happy abode into which they can penetrate; but it is moral human perfection; it is boundless virtue; it is the union of souls purified in the furnace, by rebirth, and successive and

Digitized by Google

progressive lives, which are first expiatory, and finally glorious, until they culminate in sidereal perfection. The plurality of existences is correlated with the plurality of worlds, in their progressive and ascending course.

Every age is addressed in language appropriate to its ideas, its scientific interpretations, and its traditions. Thus Jesus appropriated his language in his answer to Nicodemus (v. 5). According to the scientific interpretations of that age, and especially among the Hebrews, who relied upon the traditions of Genesis (i. 2, 6, 7, 9–11, 20; ii. 1, 4–7), which reflected them, water was generally regarded as the primitive generative principle, the organizer of all things, and as the generative element in both the organic and inorganic kingdoms of nature; the principle and source of the bodies of the living animals which it had produced, and of the body of man. Thus "to be born of water," means to be born anew with a body "and of the Spirit," by the soul coming to animate and to inhabit the body. This was rebirth or reincarnation; a reality, and not an allegory. Such is the true explanation of the words contained in the second answer of Jesus to Nicodemus, which affirmed the first, by the use of expressions, the meaning of which was defined by the sacred book of the Hebrews. Some have understood them in this sense; and have maintained the doctrine of rebirth, though it has not been generally accepted.

I myself, John the Evangelist, understood and applied the word *water* in the sense of the primitive, generative, and organizing principle of the body of man, when I said (1 John v. 8), "And there are three which bear witness on earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three are one."

These words refer to man; the Spirit bears witness to the Spirit, the Father; the water and the blood bear witness to the existence of matter united to spirit; and these three are one, Man.

This is a symbol. The water represents the primitive organizing principle of the body of man; and the blood, as the element of life, is derived from this principle.

Digitized by Google

It is thus that I, John the Evangelist, said, when speaking of Jesus under spirit-influence, of which I was unconscious in my incarnate state (1 John v. 6) that Jesus is "come of water and blood, not of water alone, but of water and blood." This asserts, in spirit and in truth, that Jesus really dwelt among men; and came not only of water (that is, with a body), but with water and blood (that is, in a living body, inhabited by his spirit); a body altogether similar to that of men, but not of the same nature, as regards "water;" the organic principle, and "blood," that is, the element of life; for all flesh is not the same flesh, and there are bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial.

(V. 6.)—The birth of man does not concern the flesh only, which is matter derived from matter; and it is the spirit alone which animates it. By thus distinguishing between the body and spirit, Jesus desired to bring prominently forward the idea which he had just expressed respecting rebirth by water and by the spirit; by matter united to spirit; by a body, and by a spirit which comes to animate and to inhabit it; just as, to be born again, man assumes a new body which his spirit comes to animate and inhabit by rebirth, and by his reincarnation.

The Church has interpreted birth by water and the spirit to refer simply to the purification of baptism, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As the Church admitted and still admits only one world, your earth, and only a single corporeal existence for the spirit, and after the death of man assigns him no destination but the separate and circumscribed localities of an "eternal hell," or purgatory, or "paradise," which is set apart for an eternal life of inaction, it has not admitted the true sense of these verses; that is, the reality of rebirth and reincarnation; and has therefore been obliged to interpret them figuratively.

When the exact words spoken by Jesus are correctly translated, they run as follows: "Verily I say unto you, If a man is not born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

The Church says (altering both the words of the Master,

Digitized by Google

and the original text), "If a man is not born again of water, and of the Holy Spirit."

If you consider this incorrect translation, and the sense attributed to the word *water*, as signifying purification by the baptism of water, you will find that these words, attributed to Jesus, but which are different from what he pronounced, necessarily imply rebirth or reincarnation, as a reality and not an allegory. If the words "born of water and of the Holy Spirit," are understood to refer to the baptism of water they certainly cannot refer to such a baptism as it has pleased the Church to imagine, but only to the baptism of water as practised at the time that Jesus conversed with Nicodemus. You must not suppose that the baptism of water which John administered to his disciples, and which the Church has continued, was a new institution. It was new in form, but not in essence. John's baptism of water was the emblem of a purification from bodily impurities, as preparatory, by repentance, to the purification of the spirit. In the Jewish purification, the newborn infant was brought to the Temple, and washed to be purified. The time only was changed, for John poured the water of baptism on the heads of those who were able to understand the importance of the act; whereas the Jewish purification, like the baptism of the Church, is merely a simulacrum or image, which is employed without the thought or knowledge of those who receive it.

What the Church has added to her baptism of water, is the emblematic sense which she attaches to this baptism; giving it to blot out an original sin, with which the newborn infant (although its soul was created expressly for the body which it has come to inhabit, and would thus be pure, since nothing impure can proceed from the hands of the Creator) was tainted, as coming from "Adam," who had transmitted to it hereditarily a personal fault of his own; and thus made it responsible for the fault of another. But the progress of the human spirit has long ago rejected this doctrine.

We have given you the explanation of what the Church calls "original sin," (vol. i. pp. 108–146, §§ 59, 60), in

Digitized by Google

speaking of the origin of the spirit; its fall, its aims, and its destinies, both as regards its original fall, at the time of its human incarnation, and its relapse during reincarnation. The meaning of a new birth by the baptism of water, as taught by the Church, can only he determined by the object of this baptism, employed, either as in the Jewish purification, to purify the body, or as in the baptism of John, which was the emblem of the purification of the flesh by the ablution of the body, as preparatory to the purification of the spirit.

The baptism of water which John administered to his disciples, was the purification of the body by ablution, as a baptism of penitence preparatory to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that both body and mind might be purified. Thus "to be born of water and of the Spirit" (or of the Holy Spirit), means to purify one's self by the body and the intelligence. The body only received one baptism of water, whether the infant received the Jewish purification in the Temple, or whether baptism was administered by John, or according to the rites of the Church. But in order that the body should be born again of water (that is, that it should be purified and renovated), it is necessary that it should be renewed; in short, that the spirit should assume a fresh body to receive again this material emblem of purification. Thus, if you regard the question from the standpoint of the incorrect translation of the words of Jesus sanctioned by the Church, you will still find that the new birth is real, and not an allegory.

Thus, the baptism of water applies to the man who is born again, and who receives a fresh body as a child, free from blemishes, which it is his duty to preserve unsoiled. It is the new vessel which has been washed that it may be in a fit state to receive the spirit which is enclosed in it. Let not the spirit misuse it, and sully its purity. The birth of man concerns only the flesh; and it is this matter only which is purified by the water of baptism, to remind man that the body is nothing in itself, and is unstained by any action of its own. The flesh without the spirit is inert, and

Digitized by Google

incapable of any action, and consequently of any fault; and the spirit which animates this perishable matter is alone responsible.

The spirit is born of spirit; for it proceeds from the supreme Intelligence which governs all things. As spirit has no affinity with matter, it can only be baptized by the Spirit; enlightened by the intelligence, and aided by the Holy Spirit; that is, by the good spirits around it, which are to it as an emanation of the Divinity, since they are His chosen instruments.

The Church and its theologians take the words of Jesus to be an allegory, and not a reality. They admit only one terrestrial existence for the spirit, and reject the law of rebirth and reincarnation. Ask them to explain, if they can, without reincarnation, the words which Jesus addressed to his disciples concerning the end of the world, and the things which were about to happen. "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled." These words proclaim that some of the generation to whom they were spoken, would be living on earth at the time of the end of the world.*

The Church rejects Reincarnation, and condemns every man as incapable of salvation who has not received her baptism; and who has not been thus received into the bosom of the Church as her son. She rejects him absolutely, although, being unbaptized, he may have followed every duty and virtue. But Christ, addressing himself to all men without distinction, has declared the love of God and the neighbour to contain all the law and the prophets. The Church rejects such a man simply because he has not received her baptism, especially if he does not desire it, and has abstained from it, regarding it as a useless material action.

This is a human invention, which will not bear examination. How could Christ, the type of goodness, justice, and love (even supposing that only those who are born again of water and of the Spirit, as the Church teaches, are saved), reject all those from the peace of the Lord who are outside the pale of the baptism of water given by the Church? It is true that the Church admits that those who follow the natural law may be saved. But what is this law, and where are its limits? The cannibal obeys the natural law; should

* Compare the explanation given in vol. ii. pp. 336, 337, § 271.

Digitized by Google

his position, therefore, be equal to that of one of the Fathers of the Church? If he does not attain to the same degree of happiness, why has the absolute Master of the Universe cast the lot of this wretched creature on these wild coasts, so far from the baptismal fonts of the Church and the gifts of the "Holy Spirit?" Can the "Holy Spirit" really stoop to such abject creatures? What says the Church?

We will not enter into details regarding the Church, with her prejudices and exigences, but confine ourselves to asking every thinking man, What is most in accordance with the justice of the Lord, and his goodness and love towards all his creatures? Is it the law of the Church, who admits only those whom she hath gathered into her fold, regardless of their faith or virtue, if they have only conformed to her dogmas; or is it the natural law of rebirth, which admits all the creatures of the Lord to equal rights and equal opportunities of success? The Lord only regards actions when they accord with conscience, and disregards good feelings unaccompanied by good actions. He does not separate charity from faith, for whoever believes, loves; and whoever loves sincerely must believe and hope. John the Baptist has told you that hope is the sister of faith, and these are both daughters of charity and love.

We have spoken of the Church and her doctrines only from her own point of view. In truth the Church asserts that faith is wholly confined to the observance of her dogmas. He who conforms to them openly may sin before God; for if he declares himself penitent, absolution will be always ready to open to him the gates of "Paradise;" but if he offends against her dogmas, although she acknowledges that they are a semi-human work, she shows herself stern, and sometimes inexorable.

What is the absolution granted by the priest to the dying man? It is a dogma of human invention, for Jesus never spoke of it; and although the sick man may have neglected to summon a priest to comfort his last moments, does the Church reject the negligent, or ignorant child, and refuse him ecclesiastical burial? If she sometimes passes

Digitized by Google

over these formal details, is it human reverence which restrains her, or the fear of public opinion? Remember that in all we have said, and even in the very form of our language, we have been speaking solely from the point of view of the Church.

Some have asked why Jesus did not make a clear and precise statement, in answering the question of Nicodemus (verse 4), and have spared Christianity and the Church from the error which has retarded human progress, by denying reincarnation. Jesus might have said, "When a man is old, his spirit must assume another body after death, that he may have a new life; for he must be born again as many times as is necessary for him to become a good spirit, by purifying himself in the crucible of reparation and progress, so that he need return no more to this earth. When he has become a good spirit, and passed through the inferior worlds, he must be born again successively and progressively in worlds higher than yours, and he must undergo this rebirth until he has attained to sidereal perfection, and become a pure spirit."

Those who speak thus either do not know, or else they forget, that the words of Jesus were not intended to bear a positive meaning to all minds, any more than when he said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." If Jesus had thus enlightened Nicodemus, the conversation must have extended to details respecting reincarnation and the plurality and habitability of worlds, which would have been more extended than men were then able to receive and comprehend, and this would have been neither possible nor convenient, having regard to the conditions of human progress.

We have already told you that reincarnation, and the relations between the invisible world and humanity, were to remain veiled from the majority. This was a necessity; for you must understand that the progress of your race has not suffered, any more than the tree suffers from being pruned and cut back in spring, when its development is desired. Trust to the wisdom of the Lord for the progress of your planet, and lend your assistance to the efforts which are now being made to draw you from the trammels of infancy, and to prepare for the period preparatory to your manhood. You must never forget that a child cannot, and ought not to, be treated like a man; but that every age requires the amount of knowledge which it is able to bear.

Digitized by Google

(V. 7.)—Here Jesus repeats his words, to recall Nicodemus to the manner of the rebirth of man by a new incarnation; the reincarnation of the spirit.

Those who represent the Church explain verse 7 as follows: "Whoever knows the human heart well, will not be surprised that man needs a new spirit, a new heart, and a new principle of life and action; and it is this which gives the right of asking for a new spirit on all occasions, and praying that Jesus, the Holy One of the holy, may send his Spirit and inspirations to be the principle of the new life."

And it is in one existence only that the Church expects that man should thus be changed into a new man; or, to use the expression of the Apostle Paul, the natural man into the spiritual man; whether he is a Polynesian or African cannibal, or a civilized European; for the Church cannot, without denying the infinite justice of the Lord, deny to all his creatures equal rights and equal claims to success.

But as she supposes this cannot always happen, she has devised two determinate localities, where she sends the spirit which could not become changed into a new man during its one and only existence, according to the manner in which her dogmas have been infringed upon. These localities are, firstly, an eternal hell; and secondly, purgatory.

The eternal hell is the kingdom of Satan, who is the actual rival of God in eternity, and is in one sense more powerful than God. Here the guilty spirit is given over eternally to incessant tortures, which some represent as material, and others as moral. It may be the prodigal son, forbidden to enter his father's house, because he has returned too late, although the Great Father always waits for him on the threshold. Nevertheless the Church declares that the treasures of the mercy of God are inexhaustible. It may be the wandering sheep, whom the gentle and benevolent Shepherd can no longer take upon his shoulders to carry to the fold, because he did not find it till too late. The prodigal son cries in vain to God his Father, who has become inaccessible or deaf both to his repentance and to his prayer that he may expiate and repair his faults, and recommence the work which he has done so badly, that he may at length receive the reward promised to the diligent labourer.

Purgatory is a place of temporary and undefined tortures, which is to lead the guilty spirit to Paradise, since, according to the Church, it has not been born again of water and of the Holy Spirit during its bodily life; that is, provided it has not, during the sole earthly existence which she assigns to it, obtained a new birth, which has changed it into a new man, and fitted it to enter the kingdom of God, which she calls Paradise.

Ought not the Church to bow before the new Revelation, and to understand the words of Jesus as it explains them? Ought she not to understand that his words imply Reincarnation, which includes hell, purgatory, expiation, reparation and progress, in the successive phases of the spirit, at the close of each existence, and in successive reincarnations, each preceded by a phase of spiritual existence in the errant state, when appropriate moral sufferings lead the guilty spirit to repent, and to desire to repair his errors, and to progress towards good? Ought not the Church to seek there for the means by which the Omnipotent God requires man to be changed into a new man?

Ought not the Church to perceive that successive reincarnations form the holy ladder which man must ascend until he has attained the moral human perfection which conducts him to God?

Digitized by Google

Certainly: God wills that all his children should be saved,* and that they should all be brought to the knowledge of the truth; the savage of Oceaniæ, as well as the civilised European; the Australian, the Laplander and the Esquimaux, as well as the "Fathers of the Church;" and that they should so fulfil the words of Jesus, "Be ye perfect as your Father in the heavens is perfect," that they should all arrive at the Father's house.

(V. 8.)—Jesus was born of the Spirit; and every man who lives according to his intelligence and not according to his body, may say, like Jesus, that he is born of the Spirit. The body springs from the body; but how few there are to-day, as in the time of Nicodemus, who can say whence the Spirit cometh, and whither it goeth; what is its essence, and at what moment it animates the vase of clay which envelopes it! What is the intelligence of man? Is it a palpable and sensible body; and can you define the moment of its presence or of its absence? Do you know whence the Spirit cometh and whither it goeth? Only he who is born of the Spirit can know this. There are but few among you who are able to live by the spirit. Understand, friends, that we are not speaking now of advanced minds, or of your leading men. The profundity of science is in proportion to its character, but alas! most of your scientific men have advanced, but a very little way, and never think of comprehending the mysteries that surround them, even on your earth, in the scale of beings and worlds, and in the presence of space and infinity; and the matter of the body is the substance which they choose for their principal divinity. But we speak of those minds who are simple, not in the ironical sense in which men use the word; nor through ignorance or incapacity; but through humility of heart and mind, and who free themselves from the trammels of the flesh as far as their humanity permits them, and really live the human life, but as if they took no part in it; not, indeed, with reference to any of its animal necessities, but with reference to the necessities of the

* Compare 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4.

Digitized by Google

mind and intelligence. Only those who understand their divine origin, and strive to draw nearer and nearer to their divine model, know that they are born of the Spirit. They know whence they come and whither they go; they know that the Spirit breathes where it will, and they hear its voice, and know whence it cometh and whither it goeth.

When we tell you that every man who lives according to his intelligence, and not according to his body, may say, like Jesus, that he is born of the Spirit, you must understand that the intelligence of such a man is illuminated by the torch which the spirits of the Lord raise up to shed its light upon him, to inspire him, or to reveal the truth to him. He alone is born of the Spirit who is prepared to understand the mysteries that we are unveiling to your eyes. But among those who receive light, there still remain many blind, and among those who hear, there are still many deaf. It is not enough to receive the revelation to know whence you come and whither you go; you must live as those live who are born of the Spirit, in the sense that the spirit rules over matter, and struggles more and more to approach the Divine Model. But how few are yet released from the slavery of matter! Do not excuse yourselves from fulfilling the necessities of life, or your material obligations, or the laws of society, for you ought to fulfil all the duties needful for your personal and collective progress in the great human family, and should set an example of all virtues, according to the law of love, by practising justice, charity and fraternity. There is nothing in all this which is incompatible with spiritual life. Amid the turmoil of existence, you can turn your eyes towards the beacon which we lift, ever shining, above your heads. You will then rise, without soiling yourselves, above all the basenesses of humanity, and above all the artificial necessities which make you greedy, hard and avaricious; all the proud ambition which leads you to crush all who are above you, and tread them down that you yourselves may rise; and all those animal propensities which cause you to rush into all kinds of excesses and crimes. No; it is not enough to have heard the revelation, and then

Digitized by Google

to live as if you had not heard it. It is not enough to know whence you come and whither you go, if you wander from your course, which you can then only recover with great difficulty.

(V. 9.)—Nicodemus had a confused idea of rebirth (a term which we designedly employ), but he regarded it as an ancient superstition. He was struck by the words of Jesus and wished for an explanation which would enlighten him; and the reply of Jesus convicted him of ignorance, and reminded him that his words sanctioned a reality; a truth which had been already discussed by the priests, Scribes, and other learned men, and had become known to the masses.

(V. 10.)—These words imply, "You are ignorant of what I tell you of rebirth, and the necessity of being born again, and of a renewed life. But you ought to know these things, for you are a master in Israel, and many others have already taught what I myself tell you." Jesus referred to his words, "Do not wonder that I said unto you, Ye must be born again," as a reality which had already been recognized in the past, and not as an allegory containing a new doctrine or idea; nor yet to sanction future human interpretations of the Church concerning a new and purely spiritual birth, through her baptism of water, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In the ancient books of the Temple, from whence the Levites drew all their knowledge, rebirth was stated, not as an article of faith, but spoken of as an ordinary fact. The Magi communicated with spirits, as you are aware.* They were mediums, and had some knowledge of reincarnation, but under less developed conditions than those now taught you by the New Revelation. All ancient nations, before the appearance of Jesus on your earth, were acquainted with the law of rebirth; as you will find, if you consult the history of antiquity in Asia and in Europe; for this belief was universal, although at the time of the mission of Jesus, the knowledge of rebirth was mingled with truth and error,

* Comp. vol. i. pp. 68–73, § 43.

Digitized by Google

and was confined to a small number of learned initiates. Among the masses, too, the idea of reincarnation still prevailed, but it was surrounded with uncertainty and obscurity, as well as with superstitions which made it scarcely intelligible.

You will find traces of this belief everywhere. It is positive at first, and then passes into the stage of old wives' fables ;* but this recollection of the past, and knowledge of your origin, has penetrated into the popular beliefs. This germ was to exist until the time came for it to throw out strong and vigorous shouts; and in order to preserve it, Jesus referred to rebirth, though under a veil, in his words and teachings. We have shown you the doctrine shining through the veil in the three first Evangelists. Jesus proclaimed it to be an accomplished fact in the person of John, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, and again proclaimed it in his conversation with Nicodemus; leaving to the promised revelation the task of explaining the natural and universal law of rebirth, in its principles, applications, and consequences, as the corner-stone of the edifice, and the method by which the spirit accomplishes its purification and progress, and succeeds in attaining to moral human perfection.

But this very important question was to remain for a time in obscurity. Reincarnation necessarily involves spiritual relationships; and the relations of your humanity with the invisible world was a weapon which you were not yet capable of handling, and which, instead of being useful, would have been injurious to the work of regeneration, and to the course of progress. To how many of your ministers might you not apply the words, "What, are you masters in Israel, and know not these things?" If the doctors in Israel had laboured to instruct themselves, with the ardent desire to instruct others, and not to make use of the light as a weapon against the vulgar, they would have known these things as

* This is expressly stated with reference to opinion in Northern Europe, in the Edda of Sæmund, at the end of the Second Lay of Helgi Hundingsbana (Thorpe's translation, ii. p. 36).—TRANSL.

Digitized by Google

well as Nicodemus ought to have known them; but ignorance is the daughter of pride. The proud man always thinks that he knows enough; he always thinks that he has attained the pinnacle of knowledge because he meets with some who are more ignorant than himself; and he sometimes fears to penetrate to the depths of certain sciences, lest he should there find his own condemnation. How many such "doctors in Israel" are living among you now!

(V. 11.)—These are prophetic words which apply equally well to all men in all ages. Incredulity, like its companion ignorance, is the daughter of pride. He who believes himself to be learned, will not listen to what is said by anyone whom he believes to be humble and insignificant. He will not even take the trouble to study the question that he rejects; why should he? What is, is good; why should he seek for anything else?

These words of Jesus declare that he bears witness (respecting reincarnation) of what he has seen. He thus manifests his extra-human origin by the knowledge and memory of what he declares himself to have seen. But he could not have possessed this knowledge if he had undergone human incarnation as you undergo it; for he could only have known this in the spiritual state. But he possessed it because he was always a spirit, although clothed in a tangible perispritic body. The words, "You have not received our testimony," were specially prophetic in the sense that the Jews, the Church, the dissenting Christian sects, and others who took the popular view, would, like Nicodemus, misinterpret the Master's words, and would thus reject Reincarnation, until the time of the new spiritual revelation.

(V. 12.)—Nicodemus and the leaders of the Church ought to have known the mysteries of Reincarnation, so far as it had been revealed in the past. But the ignorance of some (proceeding from their want of desire to know, and not from want of opportunity), and the interested motives of others which caused them to conceal what they knew, kept them in darkness.

The words of Jesus, "when the spirit is freed from the

Digitized by Google

letter," signify, "If you do not believe when I speak of the re-birth of the spirit in a new body, a thing which you ought to have known, and which takes place before your eyes, how can your limited and rebellious intelligence raise you high enough to understand things which take place in a centre from which you are far removed? How can you understand heavenly things (that is, the secrets of the intelligence, of the stars, of nature, and of the whole creation) if you do not understand the material phenomena which take place under your very eyes?"

O man, devoid of intelligence, but inflated with pride, you desire to rise towards the regions inhabited by the Spirit who is the essence of all principles, and yet your eyes are so darkened that you are incapable of seeing what passes at your feet! You would know the origin of the spirit, and do not even know the transformations of the body. Study and raise thyself, ignorant man, and then shalt thou comprehend.

(V. 13.)—These words signify, "I alone know what passes in heaven, because I alone have descended to you to fulfil a high and holy mission. I have preserved the remembrance of my country, and I alone upon your earth can return to my Father; I alone, of a different essence to yours, can live among you, and at the same time live among my brethren, and rest my head on the bosom of my Father; and therefore I alone can know what passes in my Father's house; for although I left it to visit you, I have not abandoned it, and shall speedily return to it."

If you disengage these words from their figurative character, you see that Jesus, who always speaks in reference to your planet, asserts his spiritual position and his extra-human nature. "No one has ascended to heaven except the Son of Man," implies that he alone among you has attained to sidereal perfection. "No one has descended from heaven except the Son of Man, who is in heaven," means that he alone of all living among the men to whom he spoke, came to the earth as descended from heaven, and is in heaven, being always a spirit, and free in space. Jesus thus affirms that

Digitized by Google

he alone among you is not subjected to the bondage of a material body, but is clothed with a body which leaves his spirit complete liberty and independence either to appear to men, or to return into space. At the same time he asserts his extra-human origin and nature, in possessing this tangible perispritic body; and declares that he is in constant communion with the Father; that he knows what passes in space; and that when he is released from the necessities of his earthly mission, he will resume his place in the celestial hierarchy.

(V. 14.)—This alludes to the apparent death which Jesus was about to undergo, and which was to serve as a rallying point for all who desired to walk in his steps. His "death," and the events which followed it, have served to impress the minds of men, and to attract their gaze.

O men, whoever you may be, turn your eyes with confidence towards the Cross; and remember the virtues of him who was exposed to its humiliation, to human eyes; and be assured that if you walk in his steps, no matter how humble your condition, you may succeed in raising yourselves on the cross of misery and humiliation to attain the kingdom of the heavens, which is moral human perfection.

Whoever turned his eyes towards the brazen serpent that Moses raised up in the desert, was cured of his physical sufferings; for Moses dealt with a material people materially. But Jesus raised up on the Cross of Calvary, attracts the eyes of all who suffer morally, and those who turn to him with hope and faith will find the cure for their sufferings; for they will learn to suffer with courage, resignation, and even gratitude, especially if they are enlightened by the spiritual light which shows them that human existence is the only mode of purification and progress for the spirit.

How was the physical cure effected by the Brazen Serpent?

By the aid of protecting spirits. Moses was a spirit on a mission, and was therefore aided by spirits who were equal, or even superior, to himself. He was a powerful medium, and was guided by the secret benevolent influences around

Digitized by Google

him. The Brazen Serpent was only a material object to arrest the attention of the Hebrews, who were always fickle and rebellious; and it taught them the power of faith, since faith alone effected the cure. The spirits of the Lord acted on their material bodies by spiritual magnetism, and by applying the fluids which were necessary for their cure.

(V. 15.)—"That every man who believeth should not perish, but should have age-lasting life." In order that all who walk in his steps may purify themselves, and ascend to higher and higher worlds, until they have attained to sidereal perfection, which gives them access to eternal life in the purely fluidic regions; which is the life of pure spirits who are exempt from every material influence, and are no longer liable to any incarnation or incorporation, whether fluidic or material. Believe in Jesus, for this is to practise the sublime morality personified in his teaching and example.

(V. 16.)—God has sent you a model to imitate, to help you to save yourselves, and to stimulate the work of repentance. He has sent you a guide to show you the path. Follow him with confidence; for he holds the torch which shines in the kingdom of God; and he is alone entrusted with the development and progress of your planet and its humanity.

(V. 17.)—God has not sent a judge to men, but a guide and a friend. Trust in him, and let your confidence merit this great proof of love which has been given to you; and let your submission and gratitude show the Father that what he has done for his children has not been fruitless.

(V. 18.)—Those who do not believe in Jesus do not try to follow his steps; and only those who walk in his ways can hope to succeed. You cannot succeed by invoking the name of Christ, or by making protestations of gratitude, or by assuming a prerogative of salvation; but by walking humbly, patiently, and submissively in the path which is opened to you; and by resting all your hopes in God, and using all your intelligence to live a holy life according to the inspirations of your conscience. No matter what may be a man's religion, he has a High Priest who guides him, and teaches

Digitized by Google

him to honour God by his acts, and not by his words. This is his conscience, to which he listens; and Jesus watches over its teachings. He who allows it to guide him walks in the ways of the Son of Man.

(V. 19.)—He who has been guilty of no fault need fear no judgment. Whoever endeavours to walk in the steps of the Model that has been set before you, is on his guard against committing a fault, and has therefore no judgment to fear; for you must understand the word judgment to be used as equivalent to condemnation, in the sense that a man condemns himself by the fault that he commits, by the verdict of his own conscience, which is the tribunal of God. "But he who believes not, is condemned already," for he has failed. They who wander from the paths of Jesus only do so because they think them too difficult to follow. They prefer to skirt the flowery edges of the precipice, over which they fall.

If we take the words, "Because he does not believe in the name of the only-begotten Son of God," literally, like the Roman Church, we might understand that he who does not believe in the earthly mission, and divinity of Jesus, is condemned already; that is, as the Church teaches, damned to all eternity. Or we might say that anyone who does not believe in the spiritual origin and position of Jesus, according to the New Revelation, is condemned already; that is, subjected to expiation in the errant state, and then to re-incarnation on this earth, or on other inferior worlds. Is it a perversion of the words to suppose that a good man is condemned because he does not believe in the real nature of Jesus?

The Roman Church led men away from the interpretation according to the Spirit, which gives the true sense of the letter, because she desired to keep them in the path which she had traced out for them; for everything has its object, according to the conditions of progress for the human spirit.

We repeat that actions are the principal part of human existence. Faith in God is the foundation of action. Believe in your God, and act from love to him; be charitable, gentle, and humble in heart, and obey the precepts of Jesus, whether you attribute them to a messenger of the Lord, according to the spiritual truth of the Gospels, or to

Digitized by Google

God himself, according to the dogmatic error of the Church, or attribute them (not from pride but from ignorance) to a creature like yourselves, but gifted with intelligence above that of his fellows. Whatever you believe, follow his precepts and his morality, and you will be Christians. Let human vanity glory in words. What does it matter to the Divine Greatness, or to the brightness of the torch of truth, whether you render him in words the homage which is his due, or are led by error or ignorance to reduce his greatness to your own level? March onward in the path which Jesus has opened before you, whether you think you walk by the light of the divine torch, or the print of the foot of man. March onwards ever, and you will find him, at the end of your journey, ready to receive you, and to show you the true light.

Thus a man who does not believe in the true nature of Jesus, and yet lives a good life, must disbelieve in ignorance and good faith, and not from pride, or any feeling inspired by it?

Certainly; for even actions are dead works if they are only dictated by pride, or fashion, just as they are likewise dead if they are dictated by selfishness. He who sees the light, and feels the effect of its vivifying heat, but who rejects or denies it from material interests, or from pride or worldliness ceases to be a "Christian." In fact, he no longer follows the steps of his Guide.

We are speaking only of sincere men who do not believe because they do not understand, and do not accept the truth because their intelligence is still undeveloped. Thus they live in ignorance because no one has enlightened them, or because they have been badly instructed. We are speaking of simple and conscientious men, and not of the vagaries of incredulity or hypocrisy.

(V. 19.)—Here a twofold explanation is necessary; one "Christian," and the other "Spiritual." At the time when Christ was made "man," those who saw him closed their eyes because they were unwilling to reform their conduct in such a manner as to walk in the way of salvation. The spiritual explanation is the same. Do you believe that the Lord holds that man innocent who is enlightened by the

Digitized by Google

New Revelation, but who refuses to receive it, not from incredulity, but to avoid imposing on himself too heavy a yoke; not from conscientious scruples, but because he does not wish to be forced to listen to the voice that has cried to him so long, "You are walking along a path covered with flowers, but they exhale a subtle poison, and you will die before you have finished your course."

Yes, those are judged and condemned who reject the reformation because they do not wish to reform, and reject the light because it enlightens them, and they prefer the darkness; they reject the word of truth, because the lie is sounding in their ears, and they prefer its deceitful accents to the severe remonstrances of conscience. These are condemned, for they are their own judges, and inflict the punishment upon themselves.

(V. 20.)—This verse sums up what we have just said. He who rejoices in his iniquities, or even in his errors, will not accept the law which compels him to reject that which ministers to his pleasure or his vanity. Thus he prefers darkness to light, and silence to the friendly voices of conscience and duty. He prefers the darkness, and has made his choice; he has judged and condemned himself; he has chosen the penalty, and will have to suffer it.

Pray, beloved ones, for these poor hardened sinners who refuse to hear anything. Say with us, "Lord, thou hast permitted thy light to descend to warm our hearts; revive our intelligence, and awaken our dull senses. Father of mercies, permit that we may all, without exception, share in the blessings of this regenerative light. O Father, may it shine equally for all! O Lord, send thy spirits to those who are still far from the truth, and let them tear away the veil which covers it, and display all its beauty to those who turn from it; and let them be so attracted by its charms that they may thrust from them with horror the vain idols which they worship, to turn to the light, and follow it with love.

"Father of mercies, permit our feeble voices to be raised to utter words of persuasion to our brethren, permit our regenerated hearts to raise our wandering brethren to an emotion of

Digitized by Google

love ; and enable us to love them, that we may draw to us all who fear, or suffer, or deny, or wander. Let us fold them in our arms, and press them to our living hearts, that we may bring them to thy feet, O Lord, like a handful of choice flowers whose perfume may ascend to thee!

"God of mercy, second our efforts, and give us persuasion, gentleness, perseverance, the strong faith which moves mountains, and the confidence which nothing can shake. O Lord, grant us the love which leads us to thee, and which thou extendest over all thy creatures."

JUDAS ISCARIOT.*

(V. 21.)—He who acts according to the truth will always endeavour to conform his words and actions to the divine law, as Jesus proclaimed it, when he declared it to include "all the law and the prophets." Such a man loves the light, for it alone can guide him; and he seeks it, for there is no shame in him which it can bring to light.

O beloved ones, rank yourselves with those who thus seek light, and can stand naked in the rays of the divine sun, without shame or remorse. Come, children, whom we love, to receive the rays of dazzling light which stream on all sides; come to warm your frozen hearts and stiffened limbs; for we will sustain you, and lead you on like little children, till you are able to approach nearer and nearer to the light, and to rest in its blessed rays.

VERSES 22–36.

John bears Testimony to Jesus.

(22) After these things, Jesus and his disciples came into the country of Jordan, and he dwelt there with them and baptised. (23) And John also was baptising in Ænon, near Salem, for there were many waters there, and they came and were baptised. (24) For John was not yet cast into prison. (25) Therefore there was a discussion between the disciples of John and the Jews concerning purification. (26) And they came to John, and said to him, Rabbi, he who was with thee beyond Jordan, and to whom thou hast borne witness, behold this man baptiseth, and all men come to him. (27) John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. (28) Ye your-

* Compare his previous communications, vol. ii. p. 365, § 262.

Digitized by Google

selves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but I am sent before him. (29) He who has the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoices in his joy at the bridegroom's voice; this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. (30) He must increase, but I must decrease. (31) He who cometh from above is above all; he who is from earth is of earth, and speaketh of the earth; he who is come from heaven is above all. (32) And testifieth of that which he hath seen and heard, and no man receiveth his testimony. (33) He who hath received his testimony hath solemnly affirmed that God is true. (34) For whomsoever God sendeth, speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the spirit by measure. (35) The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things unto his hand. (36) He who believeth in the Son hath age-lasting life. But he who is not persuaded by the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth in him.

§ 10 (V. 22.)—The exact circumstances were as follows: Jesus baptised by his disciples, and not with his own hands; but as his disciples acted in his name, the act was personally his own, just as you say, "He has received the baptism of Christ." This has been expressly explained (John iv. 1, 2). Jesus caused his disciples to administer the baptism of water which John had already given, in order to preserve its symbolical and material character. This is what the Church should have understood. She ought to have continued it without altering its object and end, and especially without attaching erroneous dogmatic interpretations to it, which have falsified and perverted its meaning.

(V. 25.)—The dispute which arose between the disciples of John and the Jews, concerning baptism, or purification, which are used here as synonymous terms, arose from the Jews not understanding that Jesus had the right to act as John did. You must remember that John was already regarded as a prophet sent to the house of Israel, at the time when Jesus commenced his mission. Consequently Jesus was generally regarded as an impostor who usurped the reverence due to John, or as an unfaithful disciple who led the multitude away from his master. They suposed that the Messiah would have announced himself with more pomp. You must remember that they were expecting a temporal ruler who should re-establish the kingdom of Israel. (V. 26.) This dispute led John's disciples to lay the matter before him. Some had witnessed what passed between Jesus and John on the banks of the Jordan, but, from

Digitized by Google

want of medianimic faculties, they did not see or hear the spirit-manifestations; and, notwithstanding what they had heard John say, they were influenced by the idea that the promised Messiah would have performed more surprising actions at his first appearance than the work of baptism or purification performed by his forerunner.

John bore witness to Jesus in his answer to his disciples, under spirit influence and medianimic inspiration, and humbled himself before him. As he declared, his mission was to prepare the way for the divine messenger; and he therefore renders homage to his superior by affirming his divine mission. We must free the spirit from the letter, and explain the real meaning of John's reply to his disciples.

(V. 27.)—These words imply that if Jesus had not possessed the right to purify sinners, he would not have assumed it; nor would John himself have permitted it, if he had not been really the Christ. After having reminded his disciples that he had already said that he was not the Christ, but that he was sent before him (v. 28), John said to them (verses 29, 30), "He who has the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoices in his joy at the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."

We have had occasion to tell you that these expressions "the bridegroom,—the friend of the bridegroom," allude to Hebrew traditions and customs. John used the figurative expression, "the bridegroom," to designate Jesus, on account of the honour given to him who took a wife among the Hebrews. Jesus, who descended from heaven to accomplish his mission on your earth, was represented as a pure young man who lays aside his nuptial crown to undertake the responsibilities of a family.

"The bride" of Jesus typifies your humanity, which Jesus governs as the protecting spirit of your planet, and which is his in the sense that he alone is entrusted with its development and progress, and that he alone had a superior mission to perform when he descended on the earth.

Digitized by Google

John used the expression, "the friend of the bridegroom," to designate himself, because the bridegroom's friend was the nearest and dearest to him. "The friend of the bridegroom who standeth and heareth him, rejoices in his joy at the bridegroom's voice," denotes John as the forerunner and devoted auxiliary of Jesus. John was filled with reverence and love towards Jesus, and obedient to his voice, and was overjoyed at having witnessed the commencement of his earthly mission. John is in the fulfilment of this joy; and Jesus must increase, but John must decrease. John has witnessed the commencement of the mission of Jesus, which must develop, whereas his own, which was only preparatory, must pale away and come to an end.

Thus, when these figurative expressions (verses 29, 30) are spiritually explained, John says to his disciples, "Jesus is he to whom your humanity belongs as the ruler of your planet; and he alone has a superior mission to address to it, when he has descended to it. But I, John, am only his precursor and devoted auxiliary, filled with love and reverence towards him, and obedient to his voice. I am overjoyed to behold the commencement of his mission; it has already begun, and it must develop; whereas mine, which is merely preliminary, must fade away and disappear."

Thus John spoke words, in affirming the mission of Jesus, under unconscious spirit-influence, which he himself did not clearly understand, relative to the nature of Jesus, and his origin, position, and powers in regard to your planet, your humanity, and the spirits who work, under his direction, at planetary and human development and progress.

(V. 31–35.)—John makes a comparison between Jesus and himself in these words. John himself is an earthly man subjected to human incarnation, and his words are earthly. But according to the Spirit which giveth life, John affirms the extra-human origin of Jesus. He came from above, and did not derive his origin from the earth. He is not of the earth, but has come from heaven; and he is therefore not "the earthly man," clothed with an earthly body, but "the

Digitized by Google

heavenly man," who is clothed with a heavenly body, fluidic in its nature, but bearing the human aspect, and visible, tangible, and material to human perceptions.

John asserts that Jesus is superior to all incarnate or errant spirits, whether in the stage of development and progress on your earth, by means of trials and expiations; or on a mission, aiding Jesus, and working under his directions at the progress of your planet and your humanity. "He is above all."

He asserts the superiority and supremacy which he exercises, as the protecting and ruling spirit, wielding the unlimited powers which he derives from the Father. "The Father loves him (that is, has confidence in him), and has committed all things into his hands."

He asserts that Jesus is in direct communion with the Father, and speaks only as the direct organ of the Omnipotent. When he speaks, he testifies of what he has seen and heard, and he who receives his testimony affirms that God is true. As he is not of the earth, his words are not of the earth. But being a heavenly man, in direct communion with the Father, and fulfilling his will, which he alone knows, and which he communicates to others by giving each a task in proportion to his strength, he speaks only the words of God, who has not given him his spirit by measure. He knows the mysteries of the divine will, and the truth; and being qualified to understand, and to behold the splendour of the light, there is no need to veil anything from him.

(V. 36.)—By these words, John asserts that Jesus is your model and guide, entrusted with your development and progress, who must lead you to perfection; and it is only by walking in his paths and following his steps that you can succeed in reaching your appointed goal.

The explanations which you have already received on verses 15–18 (§ 9, pp. 65–68) give you the spiritual meaning of these words. It is easily understood. He who believes and loves, obeys and succeeds; but he who does not believe wanders from the path, errs, and is judged. He will not see life, but will remain in the dark paths of human

Digitized by Google

incarnation; "but the wrath of God abideth on him;" the justice of the Lord holds him liable to expiation.

We have also already explained (pp.67 & 68, on v.18) what you should understand by the words, "He who believeth on the Son." We will now add, Jesus personifies the morality which he has declared to contain all the law and the prophets, and which preceded his appearance on earth. Every man (whether Jew or Gentile, Catholic or Protestant, Christian or Muslim, to whatever nation he belongs, and whatever may be his religion or opinions), believes in the Son, and knows him the moment that he follows, in simplicity of heart and humility of mind, the path traced out by justice, love and charity.

Do not forget that he who is living to-day under the title of a Jew, for instance, was perhaps yesterday a missionary of the Christian faith, and may be one of its martyrs to-morrow. The words of John, like those of Jesus, apply to spirits in the paths of reincarnation, and do not apply, strictly and literally, to the spirits incarnate at the moment, but to those about to come into being.

John's words, "No man receiveth his testimony," are to be understood in the same sense as those which Jesus addressed to Nicodemus, "And you have not received my testimony." (Compare the explanation of v. 11 at p. 64, § 9). John's words were true at the time with reference to his disciples, who had not recognised the mission of Jesus; and they also applied, both then and afterwards, to the Jews, and others who would misunderstand his mission, and would neither listen to the Master's voice, nor walk in his ways.

CHAP. IV.—VERSES 1–26.

The Woman of Samaria.

(1) When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptised more disciples than John, (2) Though Jesus himself baptised not, but his disciples, (3) He left Judæa, and went back again into Galilee. (4) And he must needs go through Samaria. (5) He cometh therefore into a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. (6) And Jacob's well was there. Therefore Jesus, being wearied with the journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour. (7) There cometh a woman

Digitized by Google

from Samaria to fetch water. Jesus saith to her, Give me to drink. (8) For his disciples were gone into the city to buy food. (9) Then the Samaritan woman saith to him, How is it that you, who are a Jew, ask me to give you to drink, for I am a woman of Samaria. For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. (10) Jesus answered and said to her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is who saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked him, and he would have given thee living water. (11) The woman saith to him, Lord, thou hast no bucket, and the well is deep; whence then hast thou the living water? (12) Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his cattle? (13) Jesus answered and said to her, Everyone who drinketh of this water shall thirst again. (14) But whoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall not thirst in the age, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a fountain of water, springing up into the age-long life. (15) The woman saith to him, Lord, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. (16) Jesus saith to her, Go and call thy husband. (17) The women answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus saith to her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband. (18) For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband, this thou hast spoken truly. (19) The woman saith to him, Lord, I perceive that thou art a prophet. (20) Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. (21) Jesus saith to her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. (22) Ye worship ye know not what; we worship what we know, for salvation is of the Jews. (23) But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father also seeketh such to worship him. (24) God is a spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (25) The woman saith to him, I know that Messias cometh, who is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things, (26) Jesus saith to her, I who speak to thee am he.

§ 11 (V. 1, 2.)—We have already explained how Jesus baptised through his disciples (§ 10.) The conversation between Jesus and the woman of Samaria is of the greatest importance, both as regards the comprehension of the Master's words according to the Spirit, and the explanations which we are commanded to give you because you are now able to receive them.

You are told that Jesus was wearied with the journey, and sat down on the edge of the well to rest. This was the idea of those who narrated the circumstances; and the Evangelist faithfully echoed their narrative; for, like them, he regarded Jesus from the standpoint of human life. For you must remember that Jesus appeared to the woman, as well as to others, to be a man like yourselves, clothed with a

Digitized by Google

material human body, and thus exposed to the necessities and infirmities of human existence.

Jesus sat there because he foresaw the coming of the woman, just as he asked for drink to open the conversation. You are not told that the woman gave him drink, or that he drank. The conversation commenced immediately, and Jesus conducted it in such a manner that the lesson flowed from it like living water from the rock. Everything (the place, the person, and the object for which she came to the well) was arranged according to the prejudices and traditions of the age, that it might give occasion for the conversation and the lessons which were to proceed from it, according to the necessities of the present and the future, and which would only be fully developed when future generations were prepared to receive the New Revelation.

The first lesson of Jesus is contained in v. 9-15. His answers to the woman's questions were intended to teach men that in the eyes of the Father there are neither heretics nor orthodox, but only children, more or less advanced and submissive, to whom he imparts his instructions, whatever may be their country or religion, provided that their hearts turn towards him, and are ready to receive his lessons and his mercies with joy; and that the Christ, God's heavenly messenger on your earth, gives all earnest men, who ask (whoever they are, and whatever may be their religion, opinions, or nationality), those instructions and blessings which open the paths of progress to the spirit, and lead it towards perfection.

The Jews looked upon the Samaritans as heretics, for they pretended that they alone were the children of the Lord, and possessed the sole right to inherit the kingdom of God, because they were the orthodox. The woman replied to Jesus as to an orthodox Jew, for the Jews used "Samaritan" as an expression of hatred, insult and contempt. But he answered, "If thou hadst known the gift of God, and who it is who said to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked him, and he would have given thee living water."

The words of Jesus were spirit and life. But the woman

Digitized by Google

understood them literally and materially, and continued the conversation.

Jesus, being the direct messenger of the Father among you, gives the living water in the Father's name, to every one who recognises the gift of God, and knows himself, whatever his country or opinions. The Hebrews looked upon the gift of God as the Holy Spirit; that is, the inspiration and aid of the good spirits, which God grants to every man, wholly irrespective of his religion, opinions, or nationality, who raises his heart towards the Father, and who is prepared to receive his lessons and his mercies. Man receives the inspirations of the good spirits either consciously or unconsciously, and they open up paths of progress to his mind, intellect, and heart, both in the moral, physical, and intellectual order, and lead him on towards perfection. What you call inspiration or genius, in either knowledge or charity, and which man attributes to himself in his pride and ignorance, is the gift of God.

"To know the gift of God" is to know that God can give men the assistance and inspiration of his good spirits. "To know the Messiah, or the Christ," is to know the morality which he came to sanctify among you by his teaching and example. This is the Divine Law, as eternal and immutable as God, which is written in the conscience of every man.

The water of Jacob's well is the emblem of matter which nourishes the body. The living water is the emblem of the eternal truths of moral progress, which feed the soul, and give the spirit the preponderance over matter, so that it is no longer subservient to it.

Thus, when the spirit is freed from the letter, the answer of Jesus is as follows: "I have taken the opportunity of asking you to give me drink to prove to you that I am the Messiah, that is, the Christ, the chosen messenger, to all men, whatever their country or opinions, whether Samaritans, Jews, or Gentiles; for with God there is no favour shewn to persons. He is the Father of all, and all men are his children. If you had known that God can give men the aid and inspiration of his good spirits; and the end and

Digitized by Google

object of these blessings; and if you had known the morality which I personify, you would yourself have asked to drink. Had you been inspired by the Spirits of the Lord, they would have moved you to ask me to give you drink, and I would have given you living water; that is, the spiritual water which flows from the source of eternal truths, and renovates the soul by opening the paths of all progress to the intelligence and hearts of men.

"Whoever drinks of water such as that of Jacob's well, will still be thirsty. He who lives by the body and for the body, under the dominion of matter, will still thirst for material things; whereas he who drinks of the water that I shall give him, and nourishes his soul with the spiritual water, which I have drawn at the source, from the fountain of eternal truths, will be changed, and led to practise the morality which I personify. He will then never thirst for material objects; but the water which I shall give him shall be in him a fountain springing up into everlasting life. It will be a spring of moral progress which will rise up to perfection; for all progress is indivisible and solidary, forming a new advance in the path of perfection, and tending towards that end."

The woman did not understand these answers, and said, "Lord, give me this living water that I thirst not, neither came hither to draw." How few of these answers of Jesus have been understood by those who have professed to be his representatives on earth! Instead of waiting till their brethren whom they called "heretics" asked them for the living water, and giving it to those who desired it, they have practised intolerance towards the brethren whom they ought to have loved, and persecuted them with moral and physical tortures, and handed them over to death. How many among your priests, your Levites, and your doctors of the law, are still unable to understand the Master's answers in spirit and in truth, and do not practise the teaching which flows from them!

Verses 19–26 contain several lessons which require special explanations.

Digitized by Google

After the impression that the conversation had made upon the woman of Samaria, from her point of view, and according to her intelligence, Jesus gave her an instance of his extra-human faculties which she regarded as a direct inspiration from God, and her next question was to lead to further teachings which Jesus desired to give to men.

She was struck by the fact that Jesus, whom she regarded as a Jewish prophet, should have spoken to a Samaritan; and she then asked him the question which led him to acknowledge himself to be the Messiah.

The Master's answers were only to be fully understood and practised in spirit and in truth, by generations which shall succeed your own, as the result of the New Revelation.

(V. 21.)—The thought of Jesus included the present and the future. He predicted the gradual disappearance of all the external forms of worship which still divide and separate men. He foretold the worship of the Father, apart from all external forms of religion, whether present or future, practised in temples built by men's hands in any place whatever, by material practices, or external ceremonies. Apart from all these, he foretold the worship of the Father in the heart, which when pure, is the only true temple, where his sanctuary is the conscience. There he is worshipped by the homage of thought, and by the performance of good actions, with sincerity and humility, justice, love and charity, which is spiritual prayer, the inner worship of the soul, the only true worship which men render to the Father, by thus raising themselves towards him, in spirit and in truth.

The words of Jesus were words of the future, and are so still. Are there not still various external forms of religion which divide and separate men? Are there not still Jews and Samaritans, heretics and orthodox? Has not the Church misunderstood both the teaching and the example of the Master, and deviated from the line traced out for her by the Apostles, who prepared the way for the One Universal Church? Has she not perpetuated the prejudices and pretensions of the Jews and the rulers of the synagogue, and

Digitized by Google

after usurping these pretensions, has she not denounced and rejected the Jews as heretics? Has she not retained the principle of orthodoxy which the Jews arrogated to themselves, and denounced and persecuted as heretics, and even put to death all who professed opinions contrary to her human dogmas and interpretations? Does she not declare that only those in her fold are the children of the Lord, and that they alone will inherit the kingdom of God? Does she not worship "in Jerusalem," and reject all others who worship "on the mountain?" Men, we tell you in the name of Jesus, "Believe that the time is coming when you shall no more worship the Father in Jerusalem, nor on the mountain. The time will come when all the external forms of religion which now divide and separate you will fade away and disappear. You will then assemble in tolerance and fraternity, in the name of that which constitutes all the Law and the Prophets, under a banner bearing the motto, "Love and charity," and you will worship the Father in all places alike, whether you happen to be "on the mountain" or "in Jerusalem."

(V. 22.)—These words had a special sense, applicable to the Samaritan at the time. But they had also a general sense, as a lesson to men, and included the future. The last words, "salvation is of the Jews," explain the meaning of Jesus in spirit and in truth, from both points of view. He alluded to the Messianic incarnations of an order relatively inferior to his own, which had taken place continually in the Jewish nation, to maintain the pure idea of God, and to prepare for the advent of the Word.

As regards the Samaritan woman, and all others in whose minds the pure idea of God has become impaired, either by gross errors, or by an idolatrous religion, "Ye worship ye know not what," because the idea of God has not been maintained pure among you; we know what we worship because the idea of God has been maintained pure among the Jews by the prophets.

These words of Jesus still apply to all those who have abandoned the pure idea of God, and have multiplied their

Digitized by Google

God, the Father, One and Indivisible, by trying to retain plurality in unity.

These words apply to the Church of Rome as well as to all the sects of Christian dissenters who uphold the doctrine of the Three Persons, and worship not only the Father, but "the Son," and the "Holy Spirit," although Jesus proclaimed the unity and indivisibility of the Father, the God of Israel, as strenuously as Moses and the prophets, by addressing the Father in the words, "Eternal life consists in knowing Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

"Ye worship ye know not what." You ought to worship only the Father; and you worship you know not what, when you worship the Son and the Holy Spirit; for you know not who is the Son, nor who is the Holy Spirit. You worship the Son, who is a creature of God, the well-beloved Son of the Father; his only-begotten Son, so far as you are concerned, and relatively to your planet, in virtue of his purity, and of the power which the Father has given him. He is a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, your Messiah, your protector and your ruler, but he is also your brother, for he rose originally from the same origin as yourselves, to arrive at his present dignity; and he attained to perfection by always remaining pure in the path of progress, without ever having fallen; and the origin of his perfection is lost in the obscurity of past eternities.

You adore the Holy Spirit, but this figurative name represents the creatures of God, who reflect the divine will; the pure, superior, and good spirits of the Lord, who are appointed to carry out the wishes of the Father, and to transmit the divine inspiration to yourselves; and on the inferior planets, lower still. It is a figurative expression which includes the Messiahs, the protectors and rulers of the planets, like Jesus, who are the vicegerents of the Father, and all other envoys and messengers, his ministers and agents, in the order of the hierarchy, to which their spiritual elevation assigns them.

Has not the Roman Church rejected the Father, by latterly directing her external worship exclusively to the

Digitized by Google

Son? And does not the worship of Mary threaten in its turn to supersede the worship offered to the Son?

(V. 23.)—These words relate both to the present and the future. They were true in the time of Christ, for his disciples worshipped the Father in spirit and in truth. Since then, there have always been more enlightened spirits among you who have rejected materialistic worship, and have raised themselves towards the Lord by the homage of their thoughts, hearts, and actions. This worship, which alone is pleasing to the Lord, is spreading among you more and more, and will finally prevail.

Apostles of the New Revelation, beware of falling into the exclusiveness of the Roman Church, and making a sect of the great spiritual progress which embraces your planet and its humanity, or of that Spiritism which is one of the phases of the permanent and progressive revelation of God. There are many who are not Spiritists in name, and who have no belief in any manifestations from the other world, who nevertheless worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.

The true worshippers whom the Father seeketh to worship him in spirit and in truth, are all those who (whatever may be the outward religion in which they have been born through reincarnation) reject a materialistic worship, and recognize no other temple of the Father but the human conscience. They lift themselves towards the Father by worshipping him in thought, heart, and actions, and by their serious and sustained endeavours to practice the love of God above all things, and of their neighbour as themselves. They look upon all men as their brethren, and are gifted with faith in God, and charity in all its forms, according to the law of love. Thus they always strive, in the sincerity of their hearts, never to act towards others as they would not have others act towards them; but to treat others well, according to what is true, just and right, both in word and action, and as they would have others act towards themselves.

Spiritists and Spiritualists, apostles of the New Revelation, avoid dogmatism, or you will become sectaries, and will

Digitized by Google

fail in the task that is entrusted to you, and falsify the mission that the Spirit of Truth has come to accomplish on your earth. The eternal truths which are successively and progressively revealed should be freely accepted by man; but their acceptation must be the work of time, and of the progress of the human spirit.

Men, all, whomsoever you are, and whatever the position which you occupy among the races of men, whether savage or civilized, you are all called upon to accept these eternal truths, with the aid of time and reincarnation, in full liberty of conscience, reason, and free enquiry. You are all called upon to believe in the Father; God, One and Indivisible; the Son, Jesus, your Messiah, the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet, to whom alone is entrusted the care of its development and progress, and that of your humanity, until it shall attain perfection; and in the Holy Spirit; the spirits of the Lord, who labour or concur in this development and progress, under the direction of the Master.

But be ye the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, and band yourselves together, whatever may be your opinions, or whatever external forms of worship may still divide and separate you. Band yourselves together by the law of love; for its practice will bring in the reign of the law of friendship, fraternity, liberty and equality, and will lead you to perfection.

(V. 24.)—These words were also words of the present, and words of the future. In the first place, Jesus for ever removes from men the idea of the materiality of God. He spoke thus chiefly with reference to the Gentiles, for the Jews already regarded God as a spirit; but it was necessary for him to destroy the belief in the materiality of God among them also, more especially among the common people. His words were adapted to the intelligence of his hearers. Moses defined God by an epithet which was vast in its simplicity, "I am; the Eternal; the Only Eternal; I am that I am;" God Is; his essence fills all space; the infinite universe is his residence, and neither limits nor measures can define him. He Is; but the thought is so vast that your intelli-

Digitized by Google

gence, with two thousand years' additional development, does not yet comprehend it; and it was too far above the men who listened to Jesus. To be, meant to them to live a life almost like their own; hence the mind of the majority (we speak of the vulgar) was possessed with an idea of the material corporeity of God. Jesus destroyed this by saying, "God is a Spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." That is, God is Intelligence, and intelligence has no palpable form. God is Thought; and thought is impalpable: God is fluidic at the same time that he is infinite, and he is not therefore circumscribed by any description of body.

These words were also words of the future, being designed to prepare more and more for the knowledge of the Father by teaching men what is a spirit, and by the distinction which they were obliged to make and to recognise between the finite and the infinite; between that which is limitless and that which is circumscribed; and thus between the uncreated Creator and the creature.

God is a Spirit, in the sense that every intelligent principle emanates from the Supreme Intelligence; and God is the Spirit of spirits, in the sense that these human words express the superiority of his essence.

If human words could express the divine idea, we would endeavour to teach you to understand God.

God is Intelligence and Thought, and thus the Uncreated Creator. He is also Fluid; for the universal fluid flows around him and proceeds from him as the instrument and means of all the creations in infinity and eternity, according to the laws of nature which he has established, which are as immutable and eternal as his own thought and intelligence. Thus, from both these points of view, God is the Uncreated Creator, the essence of all life. God is the universal intelligent principle acting by the power of his will upon the universal fluid and its combinations and transformations, according to these immutable and eternal laws. Thus the universal fluid produces the universal creation which you call Nature, and leads everything onwards by the immutable law

Digitized by Google

of progress and harmony, from the infinitely little to the infinitely great, in the spiritual, fluidic and material order. Is not God the motive power of everything which exists? Is he not the main support which upholds the whole machine? the fly-wheel, which drives the cogs of all the rest? And would the spirit have any existence without him? Is he not the emanative principle of all things; and of everything which lives, moves, and has its being in space and eternity?

God, as the Apostle Paul says (1 Cor. viii. 3) is, in virtue of being, the Uncreated Creator, the Father, from whom all things derive their being; and he has made us for himself, in the sense that all his creatures must necessarily act upon nature, in all the kingdoms, and in all the creations, according to his immutable and eternal laws, under the influence of his superior will, that universal life, progress and harmony may be maintained.

Your intelligence and modes of thought are too limited to enable you to comprehend God in his essence and his principles of action as the Uncreated Creator. Nevertheless, you may compare God to the sun of the infinite universe; the dazzling light which the eagle of purity alone can behold face to face. His warmth spreads throughout all worlds, and fertilizes them. He is the Supreme Intelligence, and his breath creates intelligence. His gaze creates life, and nevertheless (O poverty of your language, and weakness of your intelligence, which compels us to restrict the immensity of God to material comparisons!), God, the Principle of principles, the inexhaustible Source of all life, has no limited body, as men seek to understand it. God is the one sole principle of all that is; the light of all that sees, the fertility of everything that is produced. God is the Cause of all the causes which your gross senses strive in vain to comprehend; but this First Cause is ineffable, and so far above all intelligence that only those who approach him can comprehend it.

Have you not worshipped the materialisation of God, and is not the pure and holy spirit who stooped to your level to

Digitized by Google

teach you to love, to feel, and to live in him, the most striking image that God could give you of himself?

All that we have just told you respecting God, prepares you to understand the words spoken by the Apostle Paul, under spiritual influence and inspiration, which he did not exactly comprehend, and the full scope of which it is not yet given to you to understand.

"In him, we live and move and have our being." (Acts xvii. 28.) "For of him, and through him and to him are all things." (Rom. xi. 36.)

We must now explain the words written by the Apostle John in a similar manner. "There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are in one." (1 John v. 7.)* These were words which were useful in the present, and preparatory to the future; and the New Revelation alone was to lead men to understand them in spirit and in truth, according to the Spirit which giveth life.

The Church was led by Hebrew ideas and interpretations relative to the Holy Spirit, which was supposed to be God himself acting upon men, to make the Holy Spirit a divided, though indivisible portion of God, and equal to the Uncreated Creator. Influenced by these ideas, and by the divinity which was attributed to Jesus, the Church took these words as the basis of her human doctrine of three Gods in one, always distinct, though unipersonal, which she called the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. This is one of her errors which she will have to correct.

There are three who bear witness in heaven. Firstly, the Father, the Creator, the sole cause of all, who is God, the Father of all, who is above all, and extends his providence over all, and is thus the same to all; secondly, the Word, the palpable and visible manifestation of the action of that Creator whose watchful eye never loses sight of you, and sends you anchors of safety, on which you can and ought to rely; the Word, your Messiah, the pure and holy spirit,

* This verse is regarded as undoubtedly spurious by all critics; but compare the remarks in the Preface.—TRANS.

Digitized by Google

who is the protector and ruler of your planet, and who yet is your brother, because he is a creature of God like you; and God is his Father and your Father; his God, and your God.

The Holy Spirit, which is inspiration in the sense that it is a reflection of the divine will which flows to you, by the mediation of the celestial messengers, the spirits of the Lord, who are also your brethren, because they are, like yourselves, the creatures of God, who is their Father, and your Father, their God, and your God. The pure, superior, and good spirits of the Lord are comprised under the figurative expression of the Holy Spirit, as being the intermediaries between the Father and you; and generally the personification and agents of the divine will, in space, and in the universal creation; and in a special and peculiar manner relative to your planet and its humanity, for the maintenance of universal progress, life and harmony.

"And these three are in one." These words are figurative, and must not be materialised. The three are in one, because the Word and the Holy Spirit (or the spirits of the Lord who mediate between you and the Father) depend on that ineffable Cause, whom you call God in your human language. Do not the branches, leaves and fruits depend on the tree from which they spring?

They are in one, because they are animated by the same thought. They are one, as your body is one, as long as the limbs obey the impulse of the brain. But it is impossible to establish an exact comparison in human language relative to subjects which are wholly in the spiritual regions. They are not one as regards personality, but only in thought. Be well assured that after the spirit has attained to moral human perfection, which is sidereal perfection, it preserves its individuality as before, to all eternity, whatever advances it may have made, or whatever its superiority in knowledge may be; for progress in knowledge is without limits, since no created spirit can ever equal God.

Men who call themselves philosophers, and believe that they have penetrated to the secret principle of all things, assert that the universal

Digitized by Google

Whole is God, and that it is an error of weak minds to assert that the Uncreated Creator is a distinct personality from nature, and from everything which exists in the order of nature.

These profound thinkers are very simple. They call the universal whole the First Cause of all things. If they change the form of expression, they will find God, the Universal Whole, the instrument and means of the Creation of all things, which results from the action of the Creative Power; God, the Uncreated Creator, the First Cause. Nothing can exist without a First Cause. The generative cause of everything which you regard as a first cause, is God; for he is the creative principle of all generation, in whatever kingdom it may take place.

Ask these learned men, who are like poor blind men trying to sort out colours, the nature of the Universal Whole from whence they derive all things. Let them explain it if they can, without God, the Uncreated Creator, who is Intelligence, Thought and Fluid, acting by the universal fluid, as we have already explained, by universal spirit-action, and by laws which form part of his very essence. They will talk of nature, universal laws, perhaps even chance; but where will they find the First Cause, the root of the tree? Are not the primitive and generative forces of nature, chance, and universal harmony merely words which these reasoners are themselves unable to comprehend and to explain, and which simply disguise the profound idea which can only be expressed by the word God?

God, the Uncreated Creator, is personally distinct from the creation, as the cause is personal and distinct from the effect, although one is derived from and connected with the other. Do not act like children in their nurses' arms, who see the flame of a candle shining, and rashly endeavour to grasp it. Pain is the consequence of their rashness; but wait till you are out of leading strings before you endeavour to understand what is incomprehensible to your nature. Wait till you are sufficiently purified to be able to comprehend; for we can only tell you, "The Being who is from

Digitized by Google

all eternity and will be to all eternity is our God, the kind and gentle Master who rules over all things; the Supreme Intelligence which guides everything in the Universe, in space and in infinity."

How far you must progress, poor little children, who have not yet opened your eyes to the light, to be able to endure the lustre of this brilliant star! We use this expression, for you have no words in your human language to express so exalted and divine an idea. Leave all speculators to dream at their ease, but march forward, and remember that although light is not made for the blind, those who gaze on it imprudently may be struck with blindness.

VERSES 27–42.

Testimony of the woman of Samaria—words of Jesus to his disciples.

(27) And after this came his disciples, and wondered that he spoke with the woman; nevertheless no one said, What seekest thou? or Why speakest thou with her? (28) Then the woman left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and saith to the men, (29) Come and see a man who told me all things whatsoever I did. Is not this the Christ? (30) Then they went out of the city, and came to him. (31) In the meantime his disciples asked him saying, Rabbi, eat. (32) But he said to them, I have food to eat, which you know not of. (33) Then the disciples said to one another, Hath anyone brought him anything to eat? (34) Jesus saith to them, My food is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. (35) Say not, There are yet four months, and the harvest cometh; verily I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already for harvest. (36) Already the reaper receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit for age-lasting life, that both the sower and the reaper may rejoice together. (37) For in this is the saying true that one is the sower and another the reaper. (38) I sent you to reap that on which you toiled not; others have toiled, and you have entered into their labour. (39) And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him, through the saying of the woman who testified, He told me all things whatsoever I did. (40) So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to remain with them. And he remained there two days. (41) And many more believed through his word, (42) And said to the woman, We believe no longer through your gossip, for we ourselves have heard, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world, the Christ.

§ 12. These verses present two distinct series of ideas and events, one relating to the woman and the Samaritans, and the other to Jesus and the disciples.

Digitized by Google

The woman was chiefly impressed by the evidence which Jesus had given her of his extra-human faculties. She was much less impressed by his assertion that he was the Christ; this was not enough to convince her, and she still doubted. Race of sceptics as you are, can you not understand her doubts?

Is there any occasion to give you an explanation regarding the Samaritans? (v. 30, 39–42). Are there not many Samaritans living among you still, who cannot believe without being able to attest facts which you call divination, while others are convinced by pure moral teachings, and neither seek nor ask for anything else? Do those among you who ought to believe first, first receive the truth? Not so; but it is those who are scorned by men who believe that they have the privilege of faith. It is the heretics who first assemble round the Master, and say, "Lord, thy word has found its way into my heart; I perceive the light, and I believe." It is the same with you as it was with the Samaritans. Many will believe in the Spiritual Revelation on the report of persons whom they believe to be worthy of credit respecting physical manifestations which necessarily presuppose extra-human action, especially if the persons have witnessed them themselves. But many more will believe, after having heard the spirits of the Lord speak in intelligent spirit-manifestations. They will then say, "We no longer believe on the ground of the reports of others, but on account of what we have seen ourselves; for we ourselves have heard, and we know that they are truly the organs of the Spirit of Truth."

(V. 31–39.)—The words of Jesus were always designed to turn the minds of his disciples towards heavenly things, and to show them that the work of human progress had already been commenced by those who had come before them, and that they must continue the task. He also alluded to the reward which awaited their efforts. His words were expressly designed to show them that his sole thought and object was to pursue the work of regeneration which he had under-

Digitized by Google

taken. He was nourished with food which he alone possessed, for it is his purity which raises him above all humanity, and all necessities. Hasten to receive this divine nourishment which satisfies the spirit which seeks for life and truth.

(V.31–34.)—In making this reply to his disciples when they pressed him to eat, Jesus affirms, under a veil, that he is not subject to the material needs and requirements of humanity. and he thus asserts his extra-human nature. His answer also illustrates what we have already explained to you (cf. vol. i. p. 166 § 65) that Jesus only took food in appearance, either when it was necessary to convince men of the humanity which they were to believe him to possess, that his mission might be accepted, or to give them some lesson or example of charity, pardon or love.

(V. 35–38.)—The fields white for harvest represent the countries to which Jesus sent his disciples before him, where men dwelt who were prepared to receive the good news, to preserve the word of truth, and to join the disciples, and follow the Master. Jesus was the sower, and his disciples the reapers, who by working at the progress of their brethren, would find their reward in their own personal progress, and would thus gather fruits which would open the path to perfection to them.

(V.38.)—Jesus here alludes to the spiritual influence which prepared men to receive the words of the disciples. The spirits prepared the fields, where Jesus sent his disciples to gather the harvest. He also alludes to the errant or incarnate missionary spirits who had worked at the progress of the human spirit before his disciples. They had prepared for the advent of the Word, and would continue the work. The thought of Jesus likewise embraced the future period of the Christianity of Christ; the new era now opening before you.

Jesus is still the Sower, who sows by the spirits of the Lord, the organs of the Spirit of Truth.

Apostles of the New Revelation, and all who follow the steps of the Master, and strive to spread the faith, and lead

Digitized by Google

back the wandering sheep to the fold; you sow with Jesus, who is the Spirit of Truth, as the fulfilment and sanctification of the truth. You are the "reapers," and you partake the joy of the Master in seeing the ears of the next harvest shoot forth.

"The fields which are already ripe for harvest," are all men who hear the words of truth, weigh them, consider them, and return to the true faith, and worship in spirit and in truth. Are they not joyful, and do you not share their joy with them, and with those who reap, for they also, in their turn, will become those who sow and reap with Jesus? But it is chiefly in the Father's presence that you will experience transports of joy and gratitude in beholding both sowers and reapers assembled in closest harmony, to sing the praises of the Lord. May it be thus with you, beloved ones! This is the benediction pronounced by those who watch over you.

VERSES 43–54.

Cure of the Son of a Nobleman at Capernaum.

(43) And after the two days, he departed thence, and went into Galilee. (44) For Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. (45) Therefore when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things which he did at Jerusalem at the feast; for they also went to the feast. (46) Then Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. (47) He heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, and went to him, and asked him to come down and heal him, for he was at the point of death. (48) Then Jesus said to him, Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe. (49) The nobleman saith to him, Lord, come down before my son die. (50) Jesus saith to him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. And the man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went. (51) But already as he was going down, his servants met him, and informed him saying, Thy son liveth. (52) Then he inquired of them the hour at which he began to amend, and they said to him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. (53) Then the father knew that it was in that hour that Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth. And he believed, and his whole house. (54) This again was the second sign which Jesus wrought, when he came from Judea into Galilee.

§ 13. We need not repeat explanations which have already been given in many passages of the commentary on the three first Gospels, relating to similar cures effected by Jesus.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. V.—VERSES 1–16.

The Pool of Bethesda.

(1) After these things was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. (2) Now there is in Jerusalem a sheep-pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. (3) In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, and withered, waiting for the moving of the water. (4) For an angel descended at a certain season into the pool, and disturbed the water; then whoever went down first after the disturbance of the water, was cured of whatever disease he had. (5) And a certain man was there who had been sick for forty years. (6) Jesus, seeing him lying there, and knowing that he had already been thus for a long time, saith to him, Wilt thou be made whole? (7) The sick man answered him, Lord, I have nobody to throw me into the pool when the water is disturbed, but as I am going in, another goes down before me. (8) Jesus saith to him, Arise, take up thy couch, and walk. (9) And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his couch, and walked, and it was the Sabbath on that day. (10) The Jews therefore said to the man who was cured, It is the Sabbath, it is not lawful for you to carry your bed. (11) He answered them, He who made me whole, this man said to me, Take up thy couch and walk. (12) Then they asked him, Who is the man who said to thee, Take up thy bed and walk? (13) And the man who was healed knew not who it was, for Jesus had turned away, and there was a crowd in that place. (14) After these things, Jesus findeth him in the Temple, and said to him, Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing happen to thee. (15) The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole. (16) And on this account the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill him, because he did these things on the Sabbath.

§ 14. The story of the cure at Bethesda, as related by John, is the summary of the popular opinions which he shared. The spring at Bethesda was sometimes agitated by volcanic influences, and its warm and medicinal waters were good for various diseases; but as the cause of the phenomenon was unknown, it was attributed to miraculous agency, and was greatly exaggerated by popular rumour. This phenomenon did not recur at regular intervals, but was preceded by shocks which slightly ruffled the surface, sometimes before the water became turbid from the calcareous substances which were thrown up by subterranean agencies.

You are told that whoever went into the water first was cured of whatever disease he had. Those who entered the water with faith were cured. Those who were afflicted with diseases to which the waters were beneficial, were aided by spiritual magnetism, whereas those who were attacked by

Digitized by Google

diseases on which the waters had no effect, were cured solely by spiritual magnetism. The spirits of the Lord who approached them exercised invisible magnetic action by means of fluids appropriate to the nature of the disease, and thus effected the cure.

You know the power of faith. He who plunged into the water with perfect confidence, gratitude, and especially submission to the will of Providence, might hope to be cured; but in those days, perhaps, even more than in your own, men were led away by the crowd, or performed a mere selfish formality in going to the spring, which did not allow their spirits to ascend in thankfulness to Him who is the author of all perfect gifts. Hence many sick persons were not cured, which caused it to be supposed that some special condition was needful to success. Afterwards, to avoid the confusion caused by the eagerness of the sick to plunge into the water, the elders and the learned men promulgated the idea that only he who entered the water first was cured. Thus, the waters preserved their reputation, and when several cures took place (for there were always sick persons who were eager to be cured, and several always plunged in at once, each hoping to be first) it was supposed that it was due to the haste of the patients cured, who had plunged in at once, but if no cure took place it was thought that those who were not cured could not have been the first to plunge in.

The narrative shews you that the man who had been ill for thirty-eight years was a paralytic. You have only to refer to the explanations already given, for all needful information concerning this cure; as well as for full explanations concerning the cures which Jesus performed on the Sabbath.

VERSES 17–30.

Constant Action of the Father and of Jesus.

(17) And Jesus answered them, My Father works until to-day, and I work. (18) On this account, therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill Jesus, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was his own Father, making himself equal to God. (19) Then

Digitized by Google

Jesus answered and said to them, Verily, verily I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for whatsoever things he doeth, the Son also doth these things likewise. (20) For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things which he himself doeth, and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. (21) For as the Father raiseth the dead, and maketh alive, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. (22) For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son. (23) That all men may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who sent him. (24) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who heareth my word, and believeth on him who sent me, hath age-long life, and cometh not into condemnation, but hath passed from death into life. (25) Verily, verily I say unto you that the hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear shall live. (26) For as the Father hath life in himself, so also hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. (27) And hath given him authority also to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. (28) Marvel not at this, for an hour cometh in which all who are in the tombs shall hear his voice. (29) And shall come forth, those who have done good things to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil things to the resurrection of condemnation. (30) I can do nothing of myself. As I hear I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of my Father who sent me.

§ 15. The words of Jesus are veiled and figurative, and were only intended to be understood in spirit and in truth, by future generations.

(V. 17.)—By these words Jesus taught the Jews that there is no day of rest from good works. But this is not all; for under the veil of the letter, he declares that the action of the One, Indivisible God, from whom all things derive their being, is unceasing in space and eternity; and that he himself, like all the other Messiahs, likewise acts unceasingly, like the Father. But the Father, the Only God, has alone the power of creating, and Jesus has the power of ministering, and thus acts as God's agent in the accomplishment of his mission, which commenced at the formation of your globe, over which he presided. Afterwards he manifested his mission by his appearance on your earth, and he continues it, in order to lead you to perfection.

Under the veil of the letter, he proclaims the continual and eternal activity of God, as well as of the spirit; for every created spirit also labours, according to his degree in the spiritual scale of creation, for the universal progress, life, and harmony, in space, in the errant state, and in the

Digitized by Google

various worlds. This action proceeds from God, and is communicated by him to the pure spirits, and by them to the superior and good spirits according to their elevation and degrees of purity.

(V. 18.)—On account of Jesus speaking of God as "My Father," the Jews accused him of making himself equal to God. They understood the words, "My Father," in a literal, exclusive, and personal sense, and were irritated at the pretensions to divinity which they supposed that Jesus had made. But the Christians have upheld his divinity on the strength of words which revolted the children of Abraham, although when the Jews accused Jesus of making himself equal to God, he declared, in veiled and figurative language, his relatively inferior and dependent position in reference to God; while, at the same time, he asserted his position and power as the Messiah, the messenger of God.

(V. 19.)—"The Son can do nothing of himself." This was the reply to the accusation of the Jews: Jesus declares himself inferior to the Father, and dependent on him. But when explained according to the Spirit, these words have a wider sense and scope, as we will explain presently, in treating of v. 30.

"He does only what he sees the Father do." Speaking generally, the spirit has not senses like the body. In the case of the exalted spirits, Thought is Light, and the divine will is visible to the great spirits who approach the Fire of Omnipotence, and of all life; and it is in this sense that Jesus says that he does only what he sees the Father do. This likewise means that he does nothing except the Father's will, which he beholds as it really is.

Do not misunderstand the force of the word "sees." We did not refer to simple intuition on the part of Jesus, but rather to a light enlightening his intelligence, like that of every great spirit who ascends towards these pure regions. Thought is a visible and palpable substance to the spirit, and the more it is purified the more luminous it becomes to it. Thought is thus visible and palpable to the spirit

Digitized by Google

in the sense that it is conveyed and transmitted by a fluidic current; and you must understand that it is the light enlightening the intelligence of the pure spirit by a pure fluidic current flowing from God, which is the vehicle of the divine Thought. Do you not know that the universal fluid, in all its stages of combinations and transformations in space, is the vehicle of thought, under the attractive influence of the fluids which determine the relationships of spirits among themselves by analogy of nature and species?

"Whatsoever things the Father doeth, the Son also doeth these things likewise." This alludes to the formation of the planets, over which the pure spirits preside. God created by his will the fluids which surround him on all sides, and which are designed to contain the spiritual essences, and all the germs from which the worlds and all the kingdoms of nature are to derive their being, to be conducted, according to immutable and eternal laws, from the infinitely little to the infinitely great. The Messiahs create the worlds which are formed of these fluids, with the aid of the spirits appointed to assist them, who condense and combine the fluids under their directions.

(V. 20.)—"The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him whatsoever he doeth." The Father has confidence in the Son, and permits him to see and to comprehend the actions which he performs as the Creator, because he has attained to the knowledge and purity which qualify him to see and understand. He has communicated to him prevision of events and progress to come, both planetary and human.

"And he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel." Jesus thus alludes to the events and progress that the Father will shew him, or, in other words, which will take place by the will of the Father, and by the intervention of the Son, both during his earthly mission, and afterwards. The generation whom he addressed would marvel, because all those spirits who should not be purified at each epoch of these events, and this progress, and should still be bound to your globe, would witness them,

Digitized by Google

either in the errant state, or reincarnate; whereas all the spirits who should then be purified, and should have arrived at the superior worlds, would likewise witness them, and be present, either from the superior worlds, or as incarnate or errant spirits, on a mission to your earth.

But Jesus spoke to men who were incapable of comprehending his thought, according to the Spirit; and his meaning was veiled from them by the letter. Nevertheless, his words were intended to convince them of his relatively inferior and dependent position in respect to God. The rest of his meaning neither they, nor the men of the Christian era which followed, were capable of understanding, under the veil of the letter.

(V. 21.)—Jesus here alludes to men as "the dead;" and to the spiritual life; which is "life." "The Father raiseth the dead, and maketh alive," relative to all the spirits who have failed, and have been cast into the dark places of incarnation, and who are thus spiritually "dead." The Father raises them, and makes them alive, by making them ascend the scale of progress by reincarnations which are expiatory at first, and then by more elevated reincarnations which lead the spirit to perfection. The spirit is thus made alive, and its life is restored to it, for it is then in definite and permanent possession of the spiritual life which is the normal life of the spirit, and which it had lost. The Father makes alive the spirit whom he has created pure, and who is spiritually "dead," through having failed, by giving him the means of purifying himself. He restores his life, by the progress he has acquired, and by purity and perfection, until he has become a pure spirit, and is no longer liable to any incarnation.

Thus the Son giveth life to whom he will. That is, to those who render themselves capable and worthy to receive it; for the object of the mission of Jesus is to raise men from the sepulchre of the flesh, in which they delight, and to restore them to spiritual life.

(V. 22.)—"The Father judgeth no man." The Lord awaits with long suffering the estranged children who

Digitized by Google

approach him gradually, and will certainly finally reach him; for the law of progress is as immutable as God himself from whom it proceeds, and is the essence of everything which exists; and the spirit, the work of the divine will, created capable of perfection, and endowed with the knowledge of good and evil, is unalterably subject to this law, whatever may be the oscillations, wanderings, and perturbations of its free-will.

When Jesus said, "My Father judgeth no man," he spoke from a human point of view. Men then looked on spiritual actions, as most do still, from a human aspect, and regarded "judgment" as a sentence pronounced after faults have been exposed; after spirits appointed to defend the accused have spoken; even after an investigation, if necessary, and after due deliberation.

The judgment of God exists in fact; because it exists from all eternity. It is a law as immutable as gravitation, day and night, or ebb and flow. It is even more immutable in one sense, for the earth may pass away during its planetary revelations and transformations, without the spirit slackening its ascending course; and the law which governs the spirit cannot and will not pass away.

The judgment of God is not a judicial act, because judgment receives no formal application in consequence of isolated judgments, pronounced against any criminal in consequence of a formal inquiry into his crimes, faults, or deficiencies.

The judgment and its fulfilment exist from all eternity, in the law of spiritual attraction, which determines the relations of spirits to each other according to the character of each, by the attractive influence of the fluids, which are drawn together by analogy of nature and species. This law of attraction connects all the worlds in the universe, and all the spirits, whether incarnate or not, by means of the magnetic fluids. It is the universal bond which encircles all spirits like a single being, and aids them to ascend to God by the union of their powers, the superior spirits working incessantly at the progress of the lower.

Digitized by Google

The spirit applies this law freely to himself, with the knowledge of good and evil which God has given him; and to its decisions he is unalterably submitted. The spirit possesses free will; and he must repair his errors, and return from his wanderings of his own accord. If he is firmly resolved to renounce evil, and to enter on the path of well-doing, he attracts good influences, and enters into relationships with good spirits, animated by the same desires and sympathies as himself, who aid him to progress, and under their inspiration and protection he advances, and the judgment of God does not fall upon him.

But if the spirit, on the contrary, delights in evil, and does not listen to the friendly voices which strive to divert him from it, and to lead him to enter on a better course, he attracts evil influences, and unconsciously enters into relations with evil spirits, both incarnate and errant, who are animated by the same desires and sentiments as himself. He remains stationary, for the spirit does not retrograde, and the judgment of God falls upon him.

The judgment of God is want of progress. It is the immutable law of suffering, which sooner or later falls upon the guilty, and leads to remorse. This is as certain and inevitable as the knowledge of good and evil existing in the guilty spirit, and the law of perfectibility which proceeds from God.

Time passes away without bringing any relief, or satisfying the aspirations of the spirit; but he does not always aspire towards progress. He may also incline towards crime, idleness, malice, luxury, intemperance, pride, envy, selfishness or avarice. Do you not perceive that the moment these passions are left unsatisfied, he experiences part of the condemnation which his evil tendencies inflict upon himself? In short, the judgment of God is the fruitless struggle which continues as long as the spirit has not formed the firm resolve to renounce evil, and enter on the path of well-being; for from the moment when he becomes guilty, and cannot advance towards God, the attractive influence of the magnetic fluids which he assimilates to himself retains

Digitized by Google

him among the inferior spirits in the spheres of expiation, and he is forced to renew his trials until they have led to progress, and to suffer fresh ones until he has acquired the progress necessary to free the spirit from reincarnations in the spheres. This is what we have to tell you concerning the judgment of God. But beware of attaching to the things of the spiritual world the same ideas as to those of your own, for you would be led into error. We can only use human words to endeavour to enable you to understand subjects which are above human intelligence.

The "judgment" of God is a human expression which has enabled man to understand that as God is the source and origin of all things, everything which exists proceeds from him. But the word should be retained, although from some points of view it has no existence, for it is the only one which reminds the spirit of man of the incessant action of divinity on everything which exists. But for this expression, "the judgment of God," the fate of spirits after leaving human life, would appear to most incarnate spirits an inevitable fatality, without either reason or object. But the "judgment of God" assigns to each his real position in the eyes of all.

"But hath committed all judgment to the Son. (V. 23.) That all men may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who sent him." These words cannot be fully understood or explained, if isolated from the context. Man's judgment is followed by condemnation, and it is from this human point of view that Jesus said, "You judge according to the flesh, but I judge no one."

Jesus waits, but does not condemn, for it is man who condemns himself by his own actions. Judgments the inevitable consequence which springs from human actions. Do not forget that everything bears fruit, and the main thing is to know when to gather it. Jesus only applies the law; but it is the guilty spirit who freely judges and condemns himself.

From this point of view Jesus says, "The Father has committed all judgment to the Son." He is the interme-

Digitized by Google

diate agent who watches over the path of everyone; he urges one forward, checks the haste of another, and aids all the sheep entrusted to his care to follow the path which leads them to the fold.

The repression of guilty spirits is not a sentence followed by condemnation, but merely a paternal method of leading them back to the path of well-doing, and of helping them to save themselves by forcing them to behold the light against which they had closed their eyes; and thus to prepare them to enter on the path of expiation, in order that they may judge and condemn themselves. It is in this sense, and as the mediator between God and yourselves, that Jesus has received from the Father the power to judge; that is, to watch over the development and progress of men, and to aid them to advance, by all methods, and according to the faculties and necessities of each; "that they may honour the Son even as they honour the Father."

Jesus typifies the morality which leads to God, and the only way to honour the Father is to obey his law. Consequently he who does not practise the morality which leads to him, does not honour him, and therefore he who does not honour the Son, because he does not practice the morality which he personifies, does not honour the Father, for this morality is the Father's doctrine, and not that of his messenger.

(V. 24.)—He who can walk so purely in the steps of Jesus as not to deviate from them, and thus obeys the precepts which lead to God, enters upon a new phase of progress and experience which aids him to advance towards perfection, and he is not liable to enter upon expiation, but has passed from "death" to "life," as regards the path of progress, and relatively to his degree of purification; for he is no longer kept in exile in the spheres of expiation, but can, if his degree of purification is sufficient, be released from the material experiences of your planet, and is no longer obliged to return to a body of flesh like yours, which is figuratively a tomb to him.

(V. 25.)—This alludes to the prophets and missionaries,

Digitized by Google

or the spirits sent on a mission, or with a message to mankind, as well as to the righteous who were incarnated before the earthly mission of Jesus, and who were then already "alive," in the sense that they were sufficiently purified to be released from the material experiences of your planet; and because the degree of purification which they had acquired rendered it unnecessary for them to resume a body of flesh. They "live" because they had heard the voice of the Son of God. Jesus thus alludes to his position as the spiritual ruler of your planet, entrusted with the development and progress of your humanity.

The "dead," that is, the incarnate, who shall hear the voice of the Son of God, shall live. Jesus thus foretells and promises that all those who shall walk in his steps subsequently to his earthly mission, shall also be delivered from the material trials of your planet, and from a body of flesh like yours.

(V. 26.)—Jesus still proclaims his relatively inferior and dependent position before all. The Father hath life in himself, because he possesses all perfections; and he hath given to the Son to have life in himself, by enabling him to acquire all perfections.

(V. 27.)—"And has given him the power of judgment." We have already given you the meaning of these words under v. 22. The judgment of Christ is nothing but that law which he inevitably applies to every human spirit; the law of progress if he endeavours to improve, and the law of stagnation if he persists in his faults.

"Because he is the Son of Man." This is a figurative expression, and means, "Although he has acquired superiority by his labours, he nevertheless retains his relationship to the labourers who are still at work."

(V. 28.)—The time is coming when all those in the tombs (that is, all the incarnate spirits, for your fleshly bodies are the tomb of your spirit) shall hear the voice of the Son of Man. Jesus alludes to the results which were to spring from his earthly mission, and from the accomplishment of the mission of the Apostles; but more especially to the

Digitized by Google

fulfilment of his promises by the Spirit of Truth, and to the time of his second coming.

(V. 29).—These expressions are still figurative, and always embody the same class of ideas. Those who have progressed will be required to continue their ascending course, according to the degree of purification which they have acquired, either on your planet or on the superior worlds; but the hardened and guilty spirits will be compelled to remain on the inferior worlds, and will be reincarnated there, according to their degree of guilt, the conditions of expiation which they must suffer, and the necessities of the progress which they have to make. The tombs always mean those bodies of flesh which are the true sepulchres of the spirit. The resurrection to life is rebirth or reincarnation, which opens anew the ascending course in the path of progress; but the resurrection of condemnation is rebirth, or reincarnation to renewed trials in the spheres of expiation, to recommence the work which has been badly done.

(V. 30.)—Jesus "can do nothing of himself," because he applies the universal and immutable law of reincarnation and trials, and thus executes the eternal degrees and immutable will of the Father. He regulates the effects and consequences of the free-will of man, and of the use which he has made of it, and classes the spirit for rebirth, according to its fluidic state. When the spirit rises victorious from its trials, it enters into conditions appropriate to its faculties and capacities of progress; and the guilty spirit likewise enters into conditions appropriate to its need of reparation and progress.

"I judge as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me." You must not understand the word "hear" literally. The division of the senses does not exist to the pure spirit, whose sensations and perceptions are in all his being, without his possessing a single material and special sense.

It may be said that Jesus judges as he hears and sees, for the immutable law of progress or stagnation is only

Digitized by Google

applied by him as a consequence of the thoughts and actions of the incarnate spirits, and his judgment is just, because he does not seek his own will, but the will of him that sent him. That is, he is faithful to the inspiration which he receives directly from God, and only obeys his will in executing his immutable, eternal, and universal laws.

VERSES 31–38.

The Father's Testimony to Jesus.

(31) If I bear witness of myself, my testimony is not true. (32) There is another who beareth witness about me, and I know that the testimony which he beareth concerning me is true. (33) You sent to John, and he bore witness to the truth. (34) But I receive not the testimony from man, but I say these things that ye may be saved. (35) He was the burning and shining light, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. (36) But I have a testimony greater than that of John, for the works which my Father hath given me to finish, the same works which I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. (37) And the Father who hath sent me, he hath borne witness concerning me; you have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. (38) And you have not his word abiding in you; for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

§ 16. It is by the work that you judge of the workman and his employer.

(V. 31–33.)—Man should never set himself up as an example, but he ought to serve as one. His works and example ought to bear witness in his favour; and this is the only testimony which can be rendered of him; but others, and not himself, should bear this testimony to him. Such is the lesson to be drawn from the Master's words (v. 31.)

In v. 32 he asserts his perfect knowledge of his origin, and his certainty of the future, in reference to the mission which he has received from the Father, and which he must fulfil. He thus shows that his spirit retains its independence and liberty under the envelope which he assumed to make himself visible to men.

(V. 33–36.)—John had borne witness to the truth when he informed the messengers of the Jews that he was not the Christ, but only his Forerunner; but it was from God

Digitized by Google

that Jesus received the testimony of his mission as a celestial messenger.

"I say these things that ye may be saved." Those who believed in his mission were enabled to save themselves by receiving his words and teachings with confidence and faith, and by walking in his steps.

John was a superior spirit on a mission. The Jews had heard his words as those of a prophet, a messenger of God; but his mission was preparatory, and was only to last a short time. The Forerunner was to sink into obscurity in the presence of the Christ, and to see his task finished, when Jesus entered in his public mission. Jesus had a greater testimony than that of John in the actions which he performed, the power which was given to him, and the "miracles" which he wrought, and which bore testimony to him that he was the messenger of the Father. "And my Father who hath sent me, himself beareth witness of me." Jesus here alludes to the spirit-manifestations which took place when he was with John on the banks of the Jordan, and afterwards at the time of the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him."

Jesus adds (v. 37), "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." These words were used by Jesus in a twofold sense. He told the Jews that they had not been present at the spirit-manifestations on the banks of the Jordan, and on Mount Tabor; and he also desired to declare that God never manifests himself personally to men.

(V. 38.)—As Jesus was the messenger of God to men, his words were as the words of God. The Jews not only disbelieved his mission, but rejected his morality, his teachings, and his example, and therefore the word of God did not abide in them; but they retained the prejudices, vices, and passions with which they were imbued.

He who denied the name and mission of Jesus, from ignorance or scrupulousness, and in sincerity, but nevertheless believed in the morality which he personified, and acted

Digitized by Google

as if he had believed in the mission of Christ, would be, not in name, but in fact, just as much his disciple as the prophets and just men in Israel, before his coming upon your earth. This will always be so. Whatever may be the opinions of men, and to whatever religion or sect they belong, they are actually disciples of Jesus (although they may deny his name in the present incarnation), if they act as if they believed in him, by practising the morality which sums up the divine law, and includes all the law and the prophets. In this case their denial of the name of the Master is due to prejudice, and to the effect of the surroundings amid which they were born and have lived; and their acting as if they believed in Jesus is the reflection of a previous incarnation.

VERSES 39–47.

The Scripture Testimony to Jesus.

(39) Search the writings, for you think you have age-long life in them, and it is they which testify of me. (40) And you will not come to me, that you might have life. (41) I receive not glory from men. (42) But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you. (43) I have come in the name of my Father, and you receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive. (44) How can you believe, receiving glory from others, and seek not the glory which cometh from the only God? (45) Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye have hoped. (46) For if you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote concerning me. (47) But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?

§ 17. These verses are intelligible in themselves, especially after the explanations which we have already given.

(V.39–41.)—Jesus asserts that he is the Messiah promised to the Hebrews, according to the interpretations given to the words of Moses and the prophets; and that the Jews did not receive him, because he does not receive glory from men; that is, because he is not a material liberator. He came to give them spiritual life, and they would not come to him to receive it.

(V. 42.)—Jesus declares that he reads and knows their thoughts, and likewise asserts his extra-human faculties, origin, and nature.

Digitized by Google

(V. 42, 43.)—"I am the messenger of God, and you do not receive me; but if another should come to you in his own name, and present himself to you as a material liberator, him you will receive. How can you believe, or accept my mission, which is purely spiritual, and walk in my steps; you who seek for independence and glory in the material life, and do not seek the glory which flows from God alone, which is spiritual life?"

(V. 44.)—Had the Jews followed the law of Moses purely and faithfully? No; Jesus had already said, "I know that you have not the love of God in you."

(V. 45, 46.)—Moses had announced the coming of the Messiah, that is, the Christ, and he taught the Jews the love of God, and of the neighbour as oneself, which implies and includes the observance of the Decalogue. To believe Moses, and to believe what he had written was therefore to believe in the mission of Jesus, by extending the law which Moses had laid down to all men.

"If you had believed Moses, who announced my coming as Messiah, you would also believe me, when I tell you that I am the Messiah; because he wrote of me. If you do not believe what he has written (that is, if you do not faithfully follow his law by observing the Decalogue and practising the love of God, and of the neighbour as oneself), how can you believe what I tell you; for I come to lead you back to the pure practice of that law, by guiding you into the paths of light, justice, charity, and truth? How then can you accept my teaching and follow my commands, and my example?"

(V. 44.)—These words were designed to teach men that, whoever they are, and whatever may be their opinions, whether Jews or Gentiles, Christians or Mohammadans, it is their actions which testify for or against them, before God.

Let us consider the words of Jesus (v. 39, 45, 46), and the following passages from the Old Testament. "And in thy (Abraham's) seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice," (Gen. xxii. 18); "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come, and unto him shall

Digitized by Google

the gathering of the people be." (Gen. xlix. 10); "The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." (Deut. xviii. 15–18.) Is it correct to say that when Jesus quoted what Moses said of him, he expressly excluded all divinity for himself, or any possibility of supposing that he was God, and thus condemned beforehand the divinity which was to be attributed to him by the erroneous interpretations of men?

Certainly; but you should observe that Jesus not only refers to what Moses wrote of him, but to what was written of him by the prophets likewise, as you may perceive by his referring the Jews to the Scriptures (v. 39.)

We tell you, for Jesus, and with Jesus, as he said to the Jews, "Search the Scriptures," both of the old law and the new law, and you will find in the writings of the old law, the Revelation given through Moses and the prophets, which was purposely veiled in order to meet the necessities of the time. This Revelation, always supplemented by human interpretations, announced the coming of the Messiah. Thus the old Revelation prepared the way for that made by the angel to Mary and Joseph, respecting the appearance of Jesus on earth; it also prepared for his earthly mission, both as regards the transition which was to be accomplished under the veil of the letter, and as forming the basis of the future Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, at the time of the new era.

Search the Scriptures of the old law, and refer to all the texts which we have quoted (§ 1) on this subject, and you will then see that the Hebrew revelation represents the promised Messiah, the Christ (with reference to the transitional period which was to be provided for), as an exceptional and mysterious being, possessing at the same time both a human and extra-human, or miraculous, nature and origin. According to his human origin, he was to spring from the posterity of Abraham, and of the house of David. He was to be the Son of David, and a prophet like unto Moses, but he was also to be one in whom "all the nations of the earth should be blessed," and of whom God said

Digitized by Google

through Moses, "unto whom shall ye hearken." According to his extra-human origin, which appeared to men to be miraculous and divine, he was to be the object of a prodigy given to the house of David, and was to be born of a virgin; he was the Lord of David, and the Son of God. "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee; I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son." He founded the earth, and also the heavens, which the Hebrews regarded as an integral part of the earth.

Compare the Scriptures of the old and new law, and refer to all the texts quoted in § 1, and you will see that the Hebrew Revelation, as interpreted by Paul, represents the promised Messiah in such a manner as to lay the foundation of the future Revelation of the Spirit of Truth. It represents him as Melchizedec who appeared to Abraham, and blessed him, and received from him a share of the spoils, but who was without father, mother, or genealogy. God, who desires neither sacrifice nor oblation, formed him a body for his entrance into the world; and he knew neither beginning of life nor end of days, being a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec, not by the law of carnal succession, but by the power of his immortal life, which none could take away from him; and to whom he said through the prophets, "Thou art my Son," "O God," "God your God." But according to the words put into his mouth, "I will proclaim thy name to my brethren," "God hath taken his seat in the assembly of the mighty; he judgeth the Gods;" "I said, ye are Gods, and ye are all the Sons of the Most High," the God of the Son is the only Eternal God, the God of Israel of the Hebrew monotheism. Thus the Son was the Son of the God of the Gods, and God like his brethren,—men,—as being the Son of the Most High God. But what makes him the only Son of God, as regards you spirits who have failed, and are consequently cast into the dark places of human incarnation, is his being holy, innocent, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and perfect for ever, having founded the earth, and being entrusted with its government.

Digitized by Google

Search the Scriptures of the new law, and you will see how the appearance of Jesus on your planet, and the circumstances of his earthly mission were appropriated to the Hebrew revelation, and were accomplished conformably with it. You will see that his appearance took place, according to the Revelation made by the angel, under such circumstances that it remained secret during the earthly mission of Jesus, during which it appeared to men that he had a human father and mother, of the descendants of David. But after the fulfilment of his mission, he appeared to men to be miraculously born of a virgin by the operation of the Holy Spirit, whom the Jews regarded a manifestation of God himself. Thus you see Jesus, during his earthly mission, appearing to men as the son of Joseph and Mary, and thus by descent the son of Abraham, the son of David, a man like themselves, and a prophet like Moses. You see Jesus likewise declaring himself to be a prophet, and the son of David, calling God his Father, and at the same time calling his disciples his brethren, and saying, "My Father and your Father; my God and your God," and addressing himself to the Father in the words, "Thou, who art the only true God." He thus did all that was necessary to lead men to believe in the humanity which was attributed to him, and also gradually prepared them to receive the announcement of the Revelation of the angel, subsequently to the accomplishment of his earthly mission. You can see that the revelation of the angel was purposely veiled that it might be useful to prepare for the period of transition. You behold Jesus also purposely veiling his words, and arranging everything for the transitional period which was to follow as a necessary condition and means of progress, so as to be useful for the present and future under the veil of the letter; while, at the same time, he prepared the foundations of the future Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, the precursor of his second coming. This is the present Revelation, which replaces the letter by the Spirit which giveth life, and teaches men that the appearance of humanity and of human descent given to the Messiah by the two veiled

Digitized by Google

revelations of the old and new law, was transitory, though needful to lead men on to your days, which are the dawn of the advent of the Spirit.

But is it not a perversion of the words of Genesis, "He who shall spring from thee;" and of Deuteronomy, "a prophet like unto me," to question the extra-human nature of Jesus, as it is revealed?

The majority borrow from the revelations of the old and new law, and admit the authority of one portion, and reject that of another.

But we repeat that these two purposely veiled revelations exhibit Jesus as the Messiah, and his advent as at once human, and extra-human.

The words of Moses just quoted are only one of the phases of the revelation of the old law, and preparatory to the new law, which was itself to lead men on to your own days. This question should be raised; but if you reflect, you will understand that Moses could not announce a fact to the Hebrews which they would have been unable to understand, and which he himself in his incarnate state was equally incapable of comprehending. It would have been just as useful to have given him the mission of Jesus, and to cause him to sow good seed where nothing but darnel could yet grow. Every age has its appropriate missionaries. It is true that Moses was inspired, but for that very reason he only said what it was fitting that he should say; and in his incarnate state, he was ignorant of the mission and nature of the Messiah. It was the same with the prophets who succeeded Moses, and who revealed the extra-human nature of the Messiah. They too, were inspired, but they also said only what it was fitting for them to say; and in their incarnate state, they knew no more than Moses, for even those who were living during the earthly mission of the Messiah were not to comprehend it. Every age and era only receives what it is able to bear.

Are you not aware that revelations are successive and progressive, appropriate to the conditions and means of progress of your human generations, in such a manner as to lead them on their ascending course, while each revelation

Digitized by Google

prepares for that which is to follow? The Hebrews, who were not intended to understand the veiled revelation of the old law, were led by the human interpretation, which had been handed down to them, to look upon the Messiah as a material liberator who was to revive their independence and nationality, and to extend and establish the dominion and empire of Israel over all the nations of the earth.

The Christians, who were not to understand the revelation of the new law, regarded Christ as the promised Messiah, according to the human interpretations which they received, and ascribed divinity to him. They regarded him as a man who was clothed with a material human body like themselves, and equally subject to death; and also as a God miraculously incarnated.

And now, as a result of the magnetic and spiritual sciences which God has revived, by causing them to rise up prominently before the eyes of all, the New Revelation shows you Jesus, such as he is in spirit and in truth; a spirit who had originally the same starting-point as yourselves, but who always remained pure in the path of progress, and arrived at sidereal perfection, and thus became a pure spirit without ever having fallen; and yet he is your brother, although the founder, protector and ruler of your planet.

CHAP. VI.—VERSES 1–15.

Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes.

(1) And after these things Jesus departed across the sea of Galilee, of Tiberias. (2) And a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he performed on the sick. (3) And Jesus went up into the mountain, and sat there with his disciples. (4) And the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. (5) Then Jesus lifting up his eyes, and seeing a great multitude come to him, saith to Philip, Whence should we buy loaves that these may eat? (6) And he said this to try him, for he knew what he was about to do. (7) Philip answered him, Two hundred denarii worth of loaves is not sufficient for them, that each of them should take a little. (8) Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, one of his disciples, says to him, (9) There is a lad here, who has five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what are these among so many? (10) And Jesus said, Make the men lie down. And there was much grass in the place. Then the men lay down, the number being about five thousand. (11) And Jesus took the loaves, and having given thanks, he

Digitized by Google

gave them to the disciples, and the disciples to those lying down; likewise also as much as they desired of the fishes. (12) And when they were filled, he said to his disciples, Gather up the remaining fragments, that nothing be lost. (13) Then they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained to those who had eaten. (14) Then the men, seeing the sign which Jesus did, said, Truly this is the prophet who was to come into the world. (15) Then Jesus, knowing that they were about to come and seize upon him, to make him a king, went out into the mountain himself alone.

§ 18. The explanation previously given of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes (vol. ii. § 173, pp. 76–80) is fully applicable here. You are told that Jesus, knowing that the crowd who witnessed the "miracle" desired to make him a king, withdrew again to the mountain alone. You also know the object of the Jews, who looked upon him as a material liberator; but he had said, "My kingdom is not of this world." You have also been told what became of Jesus, when he was absent from men, and was supposed to have retired to the desert, or to the mountains.

VERSES 16–24.

Jesus walking on the Lake.

(16) And when it was evening, his disciples went down to the lake. (17) And embarking in the boat, they went across the lake to Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. (18) And the lake rose on account of a great wind that blew. (19) Then when they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty stadia, they see Jesus walking on the lake, and coming near the boat; and they were afraid. (20) And he said to them, It is I; be not afraid. (21) Then they wished to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. (22) On the next day the multitude who had remained on the other side of the lake, seeing that there was no other boat there, except that in which his disciples had embarked, and that Jesus did not go with his disciples in the boat, but that his disciples had gone away alone; (23) But there came other boats from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread, after the Lord had given thanks; (24) When therefore the multitude saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they also got into the boats, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

§ 19. Here, as elsewhere, the Gospel narratives mutually complete and explain each other; and we have already explained the phenomenon of Jesus walking on the water (vol. ii. § 174, pp. 81–84).

Digitized by Google

VERSES 25–40.

The Mission of Jesus.

(25) And finding him on the other side, they said to him, Rabbi, when camest thou here? (26) Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, You seek me not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were satisfied. (27) Labour not for the food that perisheth, but for the food which endureth to age-long life, which the Son of Man giveth you; for this has been determined by God, the Father. (28) Then they said to him, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? (29) Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you should believe in him whom he hath sent. (30) Then they said to him, What sign dost thou perform, then, that we may see and believe in thee? what dost thou work? (31) Our fathers ate manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. (32) Then Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. (33) For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world. (34) Then they said to him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. (35) And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who cometh to me shall not hunger, and he who believeth in me shall never thirst. (36) But I said to you that you have also seen me, and believe not. (37) All that the Father giveth me will come to me; and he who cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (38) For I came down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him that sent me. (39) And this is the will of my Father who sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I shall lose nothing, but should raise it up on the last day. (40) And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone who seeth the Son and believeth in him, should have age-lasting life, and that I should raise him up at the last day.

§ 20. The multitude, who had been present at the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, and who said, "This is truly the prophet who was to come into the world," perceived that Jesus had crossed the sea without making use of any boat; and as they supposed that another miracle had taken place, they said to him, "When camest thou here?" Jesus did not tell them that he had walked on the sea; for if they had known it, it would have made a still greater impression upon them, and would have again aroused their idea of making him a king by force. His mission was to be fulfilled, and to take its natural course.

He took the fact of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes as his text, in order at once to make a veiled revelation of his origin and mission, and as a lesson. But this revelation and lesson were not to be explained until men were

Digitized by Google

prepared to support and understand them. Jesus asserted his extra-human nature and origin, and his mission, which is not merely to nourish the body, but rather to nourish the soul by the true "bread of heaven;" the "bread of God;" the "bread of life," which he multiplies for those who believe in him, and who endeavour to walk in his steps.

(V. 27–33.)—Jesus here asserts his extra-human nature and origin, his mission, and his powers. God has set his seal upon the Son of Man; for he is, by his nature, the image of the substance of God, being a pure spirit, clothed with a tangible fluidic body, to render him visible to human eyes. We have already explained how, as being descended from heaven, he is the celestial man, clothed with a celestial or fluidic body.

Jesus, as the messenger of God, gives life to the world by his earthly mission, for he has laid the foundations of human regeneration. He still gives life to the world, for since his earthly mission he continues the work of human regeneration. Jesus also gave life to the world as the founder of your globe; and still gives life as its protector and ruler, for after having watched over its formation, he continues to direct its development and progress.

In v. 38 Jesus declares his dependence and inferiority in relation to God, and that he only acts according to the inspirations which he receives directly from him, and according to his will.

(V. 28, 29.)—What men must do to work the works of God is to love God above all things, and to love their neighbour as theirselves. The work of God is to believe in Jesus, and walk in his ways; for he who walks in his ways practises the love of God and of the neighbour.

(V. 32–35.)—The true "bread of heaven," which the Father gives to men, is the morality of the Master, and his lessons and examples, which you are told is not his doctrine, but the doctrine of him that sent him. He who comes to Jesus, and believes in him; that is, he who endeavours to walk in his ways, and to practise his morality, teaching, and example, shall never hunger or thirst for material thing.

Digitized by Google

He will be able to rule matter by spirit, and to use it as a means of charity, love, personal progress for himself, and collective progress for his brethren.

(V. 36.)—You have seen my works, and do not believe either in my mission or in my word.

(V. 39, 40.)—The words, "I will raise them up at the last day," allude to the termination of material incarnations. Is not the spirit which is subjected to material incarnation "dead" to spiritual life? And ought not the efforts which are made to bring it to perfection, to lead to its resurrection on the last day, when it has attained the degree of purification which will deliver it from contact with the material body?

The thought of Jesus embraced both the present and the future, and applied to the men to whom he spoke as well as to those of future generations.

And, firstly, respecting the period at which he spoke. According to the Father's will, he will lose none of these whom the Father has given him. That is, he will guard them with a watchful eye, and aid them to advance. All those who asked to gather round him as his disciples during his earthly mission have been obedient to the advice of their guides, and asked for some mission or task, from devotion, in proportion to their strength and capabilities. He will likewise deliver all those from material incarnation who have listened to his words, followed him, and endeavoured to walk in his steps; when they shall have attained to the necessary degree of purification.

Secondly, as regards the future. According to the will of the Father, all those whomsoever who see Jesus in his works, which personify him, and believe in him, and practise his morality, teachings, and example, shall have eternal life. They will pass from progress to progress, from ascent to ascent, to perfection, and will attain to the life of pure spirits, which is the eternal life of the spirit.

And Jesus will raise them up at the last day, by delivering them from material incarnation when they shall have attained the necessary degree of purification.

Digitized by Google

(V. 37.)—Jesus never rejects those who come to him. He never casts those down to the inferior worlds who enter upon the practical paths of his morality; nor will he cast those out who shall have entered on the path of progress at the time of the purification of your planet. Even the guilty and hardened spirits who will be removed from your earth will not be lost, for although they have been called like others, and have not yet been elected, they are destined afterwards to be so. Their exile on the inferior worlds is only a means of expiation, reparation and progress, to enable them also to attain to the "resurrection at the last day," and to "eternal life."

VERSES 41–51.

The Jews murmur against Jesus.

(41) Then the Jews murmured about him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. (42) And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? how then does this man say, I came down from heaven? (43) Then Jesus answered and said to them, Do not murmur among yourselves. (44) No man can come to me, unless my Father who sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. (45) It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God; therefore everyone who hath heard and learned of my Father, cometh unto me. (46) Not because anyone hath seen the Father, except he who is from the Father, he hath seen the Father. (47) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath age-lasting life. (48) I am the bread of life. (49) Your fathers ate manna in the desert, and have died. (50) This is the bread which came down from heaven, that anyone may eat of it, and not die. (51) I am the bread of life which came down from heaven. If any one shall eat of this bread, he shall live during the age. And the bread also which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

§ 21. Here you see an illustration of what we have already told you. Even those who were present at the appearance of Jesus on your earth, and during his mission, were not to understand him. No more can be given to any age than it is fitted to receive; and during his earthly mission, Jesus was to be regarded by men as a man like themselves, the son of Joseph and Mary.

The words, "I am the bread of life which came down from heaven," impressed the Jews strongly, although they could not understand them. They had a confused idea that

Digitized by Google

they implied the celestial and superhuman origin of Jesus, and said, murmuring, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" Jesus avoided answering their questions, for the revelation of the angel was to remain secret during his earthly mission, and was itself not intended to be understood. The question was only to be answered in your own days by the Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, when men should be better fitted to support and comprehend it.

Jesus contented himself with saying to the Jews, "Do not murmur among yourselves;" and then repeated the words which he had just said, and strengthened them by fresh illustrations (verses 44, 47–51), which our previous explanations (§ 20) will enable you to understand.

(V. 49.)—The incarnate spirits who ate the manna in the desert, were ignorant and material, and needed to be purified in the furnace of reincarnation.

(V. 50.)—The morality which I personify must regenerate men. I bring it them, coming among them from the celestial regions, that those who practise it may succeed in freeing themselves from material incarnation by arriving at perfection, and thus will not die.

(V. 44.)—These words were designed to emphasize the action of spirits on men, and to teach that only those incarnate spirits who obey the inspirations of good spirits, can advance towards Jesus, by earnest and sustained efforts to practise his morality, teaching and example. You must not imagine that God is a spiritual and fluidic centre, who attracts spirits immediately to himself. If this were the case, all spirits would be equally attracted to him. But it is not so; and the Lord exerts no such determinate action except upon those spirits who are sufficiently purified to be able to feel and submit to it. This action is only direct in the case of pure spirits. In the case of incarnate spirits, it only acts indirectly by the mediation of the superior and good spirits, according to their degree of elevation.

The attractive influence of God upon man can only make itself felt when the spirit has arrived at a certain degree of

Digitized by Google

purification which permits him to assimilate to some extent some of the divine emanations. The inferior spirits will also arrive at this point, at a fitting time and place, through the exertions of the good spirits who guide them, and urge them onwards. But the words of Jesus were addressed at the moment directly to those around him; otherwise he would have said, "will not be able to come to me," and not, "cannot;" which sufficiently shews that he spoke of the different degrees of advancement of the incarnate spirits who surrounded him, which led some to follow him, and others to persecute him.

(V. 45.)—According to the Spirit which giveth life, the meaning of these words is the same, and follows from what we have just said in explanation of v. 44.

The spirit in the path of progress and purification feels the impulse given by the good spirits more directly, and receives their inspiration, which has its source in the Lord; and he is consequently disposed to listen to him whom the Lord has sent.

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God," by his messengers and missionaries, whether incarnate or errant, and by the inspiration of his good spirits. Consequently, all those who have received the inspiration of the good spirits, which is the Father's voice, and have been taught by him through his missionaries, are disposed to listen, and to follow Jesus.

(V. 46.)—These words, according to the Spirit which underlies the veil of the letter, were designed to teach that no man incarnated on your planet could be in direct communion with God; and that only Jesus, a pure spirit, could receive his inspiration directly. When Jesus said of himself, "He who is born of God," and "I am descended from heaven," he asserted his extra-human origin.

VERSES 52–58.

The Morality of Jesus.

(52) Then the Jews contended among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? (53) Then Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and

Digitized by Google

drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. (54) He who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath age-lasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. (55) For my flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink. (56) He who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him. (57) As the living Father hath sent me, I also live through the Father, and he who eateth me, he also shall live through me. (58) This is the bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers ate the manna, and died. He who eateth this bread shall live through the age.

§ 22. You must not take these sayings literally, like the rulers of the Church; for here as almost everywhere in the words of Jesus, the letter is an envelope which covers the spirit. All the words of Jesus are figurative, and all the thoughts veiled by these words are spiritual. Jesus alludes to the morality which he came to preach. This is his flesh and blood, for he is essentially pure, and practised to the fullest extent the principle of love which he came to preach. Thus those who cherish this love, figuratively feed on the flesh and blood of him who is wholly love. This food will not perish, nor will he who chooses it, for it can only strengthen him, and cause him to live for ever in the joy of the Lord.

Is it not incredible that sensible and well-informed men should have erred so far as to liken the spiritual essence of the Saviour Christ, to material food, subjected in part to maceration in the stomach, and liable to be carried away by digestion? O poor humanity! You have already received sufficient explanations respecting this materialistic human doctrine of the Real Presence (vol. ii. §§ 283, 284, pp. 366–373.)

Those who established this dogma would have avoided the monstrous error caused by blindly following the letter, and would have understood the words of Jesus according to the spirit which giveth life, if they had sufficiently meditated upon and understood the words spoken at the Last Supper, "Do this in remembrance of me;" as well as those which we shall presently see Jesus address to his disciples, because some of them murmured precisely on account of the figurative expressions which we are now explaining. "It is the Spirit which giveth life; the flesh profiteth

Digitized by Google

nothing; the words that I speak to you are spirit and life."

He who practises the morality which Jesus came to preach by his teaching and example; and thus practices human brotherhood; he and he alone eats the "bread of life," the "flesh and the blood," which he personifies by this morality. He alone has eternal life, and advances on the path of progress, and is sure to attain to perfection, and to the life of the pure spirits, by his perseverance. Jesus "will raise him up at the last day," and will release him from material incarnations when he shall have attained the degree of purification which will release him from contact from the material body; for the morality of Jesus is truly meat and drink to the spirit, thus nourishes itself with love, drinks from the source of all progress, and of the eternal truths, progresses, and purifies itself.

Yes, he who practices the morality of Jesus, he and he alone abides in Jesus and Jesus abides in him; for the principle of love unites them. Just as God who sent Jesus on a mission to the earth has all existence in himself from all eternity; and as Jesus, a pure essence, lives by the Father, because he is in direct communion with him; even so, he who practices the morality of Jesus will live by him, being in direct communion with him, when he shall have acquired the necessary degree of purification; and he will live for ever, for he will attain to perfection, and the life of the pure spirits.

If man does not practice the morality of Jesus, he has no life in himself. He will neither progress, nor purify himself; but will remain stationary, for the life of the spirit is progress and purification; and he will therefore be subject to material expiatory incarnation.

VERSES 59–71.

Murmurs of some of the Disciples of Jesus.

(59) Jesus said these things teaching in a synagogue at Capernaum. (60) Then many of his disciples who heard it said, This saying is hard, who can listen to it? (61) And Jesus perceiving in himself that his disciples murmured about this, said to them, Does this offend you? (62)

Digitized by Google

What if you should see the Son of Man rise up where he was before? (63) The Spirit is that which giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words which I speak unto you are spirit and life. (64) But there are some among you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who believed not, and who it was who should betray him. (65) And he said, On this account I have told you that no one can come to me unless it be given him from my Father. (66) From this time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. (67) Then Jesus said to the twelve, Do you also wish to go away? (68) Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of age-lasting life. (69) And we have believed, and know that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (70) Jesus answered them, Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? (71) And he spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for this man who was one of the twelve, was about to betray him.

§ 23. Some of the auditors of Jesus understood his words literally, as did the Church afterwards.

We have already explained the reference to Judas Iscariot (vol. ii. §§ 281, 282, pp. 361–366). The words neither imply predestination nor anticipated condemnation; but merely denote that Jesus foresaw the weakness of a man who had undertaken a task above his strength. The expression "devil," is an incorrect interpretation, in the sense which the Church attaches to it. Jesus simply meant to call Judas an evil spirit, knowing that he was a proud spirit who had been led to undertake a task beyond his strength from ambition, and not from pure disinterested devotion. You are aware that he was ruled by pride, ambition, and the desire of speedy success. This "devil" is now a purified spirit, who has become one of the faithful disciples of Jesus, and one of his devoted auxiliaries in the work of human regeneration.

After his disciples began to murmur Jesus added, "What if you shall see the Son of Man rise up where he was before?" He alluded to his "ascension," made a strong impression on the minds of his disciples, and especially on the Apostles; and again affirmed his extra-human nature and origin. Jesus had never suffered human incarnation, and was a native of the ethereal regions, to which he would return when his mission was completed. We have already shown you that the idea that Jesus suffered material incarnation like yours, underwent

Digitized by Google

real death, and afterwards appeared and ascended as a disincarnate spirit which had left its body by death, is absolutely inadmissible. We insist upon this point, for if you admit it you must also admit that the disciples were both tricksters and madmen, for they would have sacrificed their lives to uphold the dreams of one whom they regarded as an impostor. Jesus could have been nothing less, from the time that his disciples were obliged to make away with the Master's body, in order to convince themselves beyond a doubt that his words were true; and is such madness conceivable? And can you not account much better for the lively and ardent faith of the Apostles in the fulfilment of the promised "Resurrection?"

He who would dive too deep loses himself in the darkness of the abyss; and he would remain on the surface, creeps over the roughness of the soil, and bruises himself.

Men do not understand and will not admit that fluidic incarnation which could alone clothe a spirit of the nature of Jesus, because they are too much blinded by matter. Let them wait a little, and their intelligence will develope itself, and allow them to study more seriously and profoundly. They will then understand the reason and necessity of a fact which now appears to them to be impossible and useless, and will bow before the goodness of the Lord.

(V. 63.)—Jesus designed to teach men that they should not interpret figurative words expressing only spiritual thoughts, according to the letter, but according to the spirit. But the human mind was only to understand this fully through the New Revelation. It is the Spirit which giveth life, for it is the cause and source of life, and of human intelligence. The flesh profiteth nothing, for it is in itself only inert matter, and is only the material means which the spirit employs for the manifestations of life and intelligence, in the state of human incarnation. The words of Jesus are spirit and life as emanating from a perfect spiritual essence, and not obstructed by the material and perishable flesh.

(V. 64, 65).—When the spirit asks to fulfil a special mission, God grants his request, although foreseeing the

Digitized by Google

consequences. Thus, the missions given to the Apostles were to yield the fruits of love and faith; but the missions of Judas and many others who gathered round Jesus as disciples, were to yield only evil fruits, or to remain sterile, because the spirits who had undertaken them, had undertaken a task beyond their strength, either from pride, or from the desire of reaching the goal more quickly, and did not attain their end.

The omniscience of the Lord shows him the results, but the spirit always possesses his free will, even before being incarnated; for he is always shown the good or evil chances of the trials which he requests. He is even forewarned by his guides of their consequences; and it is for him to decide whether he will risk them or not. Thus Jesus, being in direct communion with God, and participating in his omniscience in this respect, knew from the beginning (that is, from the time that the spirits had demanded their missions and trials) who would yield fruits of love and faith, because they had not asked for a mission or task above their strength, and were moved by feelings of devotion. These were those whom the Father had given him, for they had obtained their mission and trial in accordance with the advice of their guides. Jesus also knew from the beginning whom they were whom the Father had not given him, and who had demanded and obtained a mission or trial beyond their strength, contrary to the advice of their guides, in the hope of advancing more quickly, or else from pride; and these having relied on their own strength, would not reach the goal. This explains why several disciples withdrew from the side of Jesus; and also his foreknowledge of this defection, the future treachery of Judas, and the fidelity of the other Apostles, who accomplished their mission, with its full results.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSES 1–9.

Incredulity of the relatives of Jesus.

(1) And after these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Judæa, because the Jews sought to kill him. (2) Now the

Digitized by Google

Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. (3) Then his brethren said to him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. (4) For no one does anything in secret, and seeks to be in openness himself. If thou doest these things, show thyself to the world. (5) For neither did his brethren believe in him. (6) Then Jesus said to them, My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready. (7) The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, for I bear witness that its works are evil. (8) Go ye up to this feast; but I go not yet up to this feast, for my time is not yet fulfilled. (9) And having told them this, he remained in Galilee.

§ 24. These verses are easily intelligible. We have already explained that it is the relatives of Jesus who are intended by the term "brethren." (Vol. ii. § 163, pp. 57–59).

The relatives of Jesus were among those spirits who are so materialized by their envelope that they require to touch and to see before they can believe, and yet do not always rely on their own senses. They were among those who gathered round Jesus to aid in his work, but who had fallen asleep in matter.

Verses 6 and 8 allude to the period at which Jesus would preach and act openly, in order to bring about the events which were to follow.

Verses 10–53.

Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles.

§ 25. We must explain the ideas and events in order, and divide the chapter as necessary.

(10) But when his brethren had gone up, then he himself also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. (11) Then the Jews sought for him at the feast, and said, Where is he? (12) And there was much murmuring about him among the multitudes, for some said, He is a good man; and others said, No, but he deceives the multitude. (13) But no one spoke of him openly, for fear of the Jews. (14) And when it was already about the middle of the feast, Jesus came into the Temple and taught.

You can understand why Jesus acted thus. If he had gone up to Jerusalem with the other travellers, he would have attracted public attention beforehand, and the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests would have been prepared for his presence. He therefore waited till all were assembled before he appeared in the Temple, and spread his teachings

Digitized by Google

among the multitude, who heard them under the influence of the different conjectures which they had formed respecting his absence.

(15) And the Jews wondered, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? (16) Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. (17) If any man desires to do his will, he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself. (18) He who speaks of himself, seeks his own glory, but he who seeks the glory of him that sent him, is true, and unrighteousness is not in him. (19) Did not Moses give you the Law, and none among you obey the Law; wherefore do you seek to kill me?

The Jews knew well that Jesus had never studied; how then did he know the Scriptures? Where is the man undergoing material human incarnation, who could know the Scriptures without having studied them? The reply of Jesus, though evasive according to the letter, answers the question according to the spirit. By saying, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me," he affirms his knowledge of everything in the Scriptures, without having studied them. He asserts that he knows everything which he teaches, being in direct communion with him that sent him, and that his knowledge, and consequently his nature and origin, are extra-human.

He incited the Jews to reflect on what he said, by referring to what men should do according to the law of Moses, to fulfil the will of God. He led them to perceive that his doctrine emanated from a divine source, and that he is the direct organ of the Lord, not seeking the vanity of human glories, but the glory of him that sent him, and that his words are words of justice, love, and truth.

(V. 19.)—The law was included in the Decalogue; in the love of God above all things, and of the neighbour as one's self, which was taught in Leviticus and Deuteronomy; but none of them obeyed the law.

(19) Why seek ye to kill me? (20) The multitude answered and said, Thou hast a devil; who seeks to kill thee? (21) Jesus answered and said to them, I have performed one work, and you all marvel. (22) On this account Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers) and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. (23) If a man receive circumcision on the Sabbath, that the law of Moses be not broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man

Digitized by Google

on the Sabbath? (24) Judge not according to appearance, but judge just judgment.

We have already explained the lesson relative to the Sabbath, and the cure of the paralytic, to which Jesus alludes.

Circumcision was a custom which the Patriarchs adopted from sanitary motives; and Moses made it an obligatory religious law.

When the charge of breaking the Sabbath was brought against a good work, it had the appearance of respect for the law. It appeared to the Jews to be a violation of the law, because it was an action, and every action was forbidden on the Sabbath; but in justice it ought to be admitted that there is no day when it is forbidden to perform a good action; and even if there were, it would not be the day consecrated to the Lord. To accuse a man of breaking the Sabbath when he performs a good work is not to observe the law.

The idea contained in the words of Jesus is a general lesson to men. Never allow yourselves to be led away by the letter, but reject all literal interpretations which the Spirit condemns as unjust. Always act justly towards your brethren, and rejoice with heartfelt sincerity at their good works. Free yourselves from all formalism, and from every sectarian feeling which would interfere with your practising justice and charity towards all; or which is an obstacle to the accomplishment of the law of love, which should lead men to fraternity and unity.

(25) Then some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem said, Is not this man him whom they seek to kill? (26) And behold he speaks in public, and they say nothing to him. Do not the rulers know of a truth that this is truly the Christ? (27) But we know whence this man is, and when the Christ shall come, no man knoweth whence he is.

You have here another testimony to the origin of Jesus, and an illustration of the error into which the Jews fell in attributing a human mission to the Messiah. But how could they suppose that him whom they expected to be the descendant of David should rise up amongst them as a man, without their knowing whence he came? The prophecy, or

Digitized by Google

rather the result of the prophecy according to human interpretations, and the consequences which had been deduced from it, applied wholly to the spiritual and extra-human origin of Jesus.

(28) Then Jesus who was teaching in the Temple, cried out and said, Ye both know me, and know whence I am, and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. (29) But I know him, because I am from him, and he hath sent me.

The Jews knew the outward appearance of Jesus, and they all knew where his human residence was; but they knew not, and would not believe when he told them that there was nothing material in his mission, and that his nature was immaterial. His incarnation was immaterial relatively to men, for it was accomplished apart from the laws of your planet, but this was beyond the comprehension of the men of that age, and will not be much understood by your contemporaries.*

Jesus alone among men could know him that sent him, by his spiritual essence (verse 29), and in this verse he alluded to his extra-human nature, and his spiritual essence and position, which allowed him, during his earthly mission, to retain his knowledge of God, and to remain in direct communion with him.

(30) Then they sought to strike him, but no one laid his hand upon him, because his hour was not yet come.

Jesus acted on those around him magnetically and by the power of his will, to turn them from the thought of seizing him, but if the time had come, he would not have withdrawn himself from the pursuit of those who wished to put him to death.

You know the power of the will of the human magnetiser on man, and can understand what that of Jesus might be, who possessed magnetic power in a pre-eminent degree.

(31) And many of the people believed in him, and said, When the Christ shall come, will he perform more miracles than this man has done? (32) The Pharisees heard the multitude murmuring these things about him, and the Pharisees and high priests sent officers to seize him. (33) Then Jesus said to them, Yet a little time am I with

* These words were medianimically dictated in December, 1864.

Digitized by Google

you, and I go to him who sent me. (34) You shall seek me, and you shall not find me, and where I am, you cannot come. (35) Then the Jews said to themselves, Where is he about to go that we shall not find him? Is he about to go to the dispersed among the Greeks, and to teach the Greeks? (36) What is this saying which he says, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, ye cannot come?

Some of your translations read, "And you cannot come where I shall be." The original text is, "Where I am." These words were only to be understood at the time of the New Revelation by the explanation of the extra-human nature and origin of Jesus, which he thus asserted under the veil of the letter. He was apart from humanity by the nature of his body, which was fluidic and perispritic, although rendered visible to human eyes by its tangibility, and therefore he was always a spirit in the ethereal regions.

When Jesus said, "Where I am, ye cannot come," he alluded to the material human incarnation of the Jews, which bound them to the earth, because they were of the earth. He did not suffer a material incarnation like theirs, which did not permit them to follow him to the ethereal regions, whence he came. He was thus from heaven, and possessed the power of returning thither at will, by making himself invisible to human eyes. He also alluded to his final return to the ethereal regions, at the time of his "Ascension," when he resumed his own spiritual nature. In this sense, the idea may also be translated, "Ye cannot come where I shall be." The Jews were not pure enough to follow him to the regions to which he was about to return; and would still have to search for him a long time without finding him. They were material spirits, and did not understand that when Jesus said, "Yet a little time I am with you, and I go to him who sent me," he alluded to his apparent death and resurrection, as well as to his return to his own spiritual nature at the time of the "Ascension," when he finally left the earth.

(37) And on the last and great day of the feast Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. (38) He who believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, rivers of living water shall flow out of his belly. (39) And he said this concerning the Spirit, which those who believed in him were about to receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The language of Jesus was always figurative, and the idea

Digitized by Google

wholly spiritual. He attracted the attention of his hearers by material images.

John, the narrator, recorded the interpretation which had been specially given with reference to the Master's thought concerning the men to whom his words were addressed, and who walked in his steps, and received the "Holy Spirit," either visibly, like the Apostles, or occultly, like the other disciples who joined them; the Holy Spirit being the assistance and concurrence of superior and good spirits. But Jesus designed these words to apply to all ages, and to all men, and according to the Spirit which giveth life, they signify, "If any man thirsts for progress and purification, let him come to the source which I personify by the morality which I have preached, and let him drink a deep draught from the full cup of love and charity, the living water, which purifies the soul, and gives it eternal life.

"If any one follows the morality which I personify, and walks in the path which I have traced out, he will produce abundant good works in the sincerity of his heart, and will labour with ardour and perseverance at his own personal progress, and at the progress of his brethren; and will be inspired, aided and sustained, either consciously or unconsciously, by good spirits."

(40) Then many of the people, hearing the saying, said, This is truly the prophet. (41) Others said, This is the Christ. Others said, No, for does the Christ come from Galilee? (42) Does not the Scripture say that the Christ cometh from the stock of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was? (43) Then there was a division in the multitude on account of him. (44) And some of them wished to seize on him, but no one laid hands on him. (45) Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and these said to them, Why have you not brought him? (46) The officers answered, Never man spoke like this man. (47) Then the Pharisees answered them, Are you also deceived? (48) Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed in him? (49) But this multitude, who know not the law, are accursed.

These divisions among the Jews respecting Jesus show you that the Revelation which the angel delivered to Mary and Joseph had remained secret, as was intended, for reasons which we have already explained; and that the appearance of Jesus at Bethlehem was either unknown, or had been

Digitized by Google

forgotten by the Jews; for everything was to conduce to the success of the work.

Some of the Jews desired to seize Jesus, but no one laid hands on him, and the officers returned without arresting him. This is explained under verse 30. The language of the Pharisees is that used by the leaders of sects at the beginning of a New Revelation. Do not the Pharisees of your own days often speak like this?

(50) Nicodemus, who was one of them, the same who came to him by night, said to them, (51) Does our law judge the man, unless it first hear him, and know what he does? (52) They answered and said to him, Art thou also from Galilee? Search and look, for out of Galilee riseth no prophet. (53) And each went to his house.

The Pharisees shared in the ignorance of the Jews respecting the place of the appearance of Jesus.

The words of justice spoken by Nicodemus, should not be lost sight of from the point of view of social progress, and the sacred right of defence and judgment. They served to bring into relief the great and sublime personality of Jesus.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSES 1–11.

*The Adulteress.**

(1) And Jesus came to the Mount of Olives. (2) And in the morning he went again to the Temple, and all the people came to him, and he sat there and taught them. (3) And the Scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman taken in adultery, and having sat her in the middle, they say to him, (4) Teacher, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. (5) But Moses commanded us in the law that such should be stoned; what, therefore, sayest thou? (6) And they said this to try him, that they might have an opportunity to accuse him. And Jesus stooped down, and wrote with his finger on the ground. (7) And as they continued to ask him, he raised himself up, and said to them, Let him among you who is without sin, first cast the stone at her. (8) And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. (9) And they who heard, were convicted by their conscience, and went out one by one, beginning from the elders to the last, and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. (10) And Jesus raised himself, and seeing

* This passage is believed to be extracted from the lost Gospel to the Hebrews, probably a genuine book.—TRANS.

Digitized by Google

no one but the woman, he said to her, Well, woman, where are thy accusers? Hath no one condemned thee? And she said, No one, Lord. (11) And Jesus said to her, Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more.

§ 26. (V. 6–8.)—Jesus stooped down twice to give the men around him time for reflection, without embarrasing them by his observation, or leading them to decide on anything in opposition to their conscience.

The Master commissions us to tell you what it was that he thus wrote twice on the ground, and which contained and embodied the whole of the lesson which he desired to give. In reply to the first question, he wrote, "Never do to others what you would not have others do to you." The second time, after saying, "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone," he wrote, "When you would judge your brother, reflect in your own heart, and appeal to your conscience." But the man who explores his own heart, and questions his conscience, will never cast the stone at his brother, for he will perceive that he also is a sinner, and that he must pardon others, as he would be pardoned himself, and he therefore abstains from doing to others what he would not have done to himself. The words spoken by Jesus to the adulteress are likewise a lesson and an example of mercy and pardon which men ought to apply to themselves; and urge all men to make every effort to avoid falling into a fault a second time.

VERSES 12–24.

Address of Jesus to the Jews.

§ 27. Here also we will divide the verses according to the ideas which they contain.

(12) Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, I am the light of the world. He who heareth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (13) Then the Pharisees said to him, Thou bearest witness of thyself; thy witness is not true. (14) Jesus answered and said, Although I bear witness of myself, my witness is true, for I know whence I came, and whither I go; and you know not whence I came and whither I go. (15) You judge according to the flesh, but I judge no one.

Jesus is in truth the light which enlightens men, but until now, no one has given an exact account of his origin; no

Digitized by Google

one has been able to follow him to the place where he went; he alone knew whence he descended among men; and he alone knew his origin, and could give a correct account of it.

"You judge according to the flesh," said he to the people and the Pharisees, "and you know not whence I come, and whither I go;" that is, according to the Spirit. You ascribe to me a human nature and origin like your own, and you know nothing of my extra-human nature, my spiritual origin, and my mission.

"Though I bear witness of myself, my witness is true, because I know whence I come and whither I go;" because I myself, who speak to you, know my nature, origin, and mission, having preserved the liberty and independence of my spirit, under this envelope which renders me visible to your eyes.

The words, "I judge no one," have been already explained. When Jesus said, "You judge according to the flesh," he alluded to the human sentence of condemnation which would soon be pronounced against him.

(16) And even if I judge, my judgment is true, for I am not alone; but I and my Father who sent me.

Jesus thus asserts that, although present with men during his earthly mission, yet he is nevertheless always in direct communion with God, who is Absolute Truth.

(17) And it is written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. (18) It is I who bear witness of myself, and my Father who sent me beareth witness of me.

Jesus bore witness, not of human actions, but of his superhuman nature, and spiritual origin. Thus, he whom all regarded as a man, bore witness that his spirit proceeded from a purer source than any other, and that the Lord also bore witness to him by the actions which the will of the spirit could accomplish.

(19) Then they said to him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, You neither know me nor my Father; if you had known me, you would have known my Father also.

If men had understood the origin of Jesus, and the nature of the spiritual hierarchy, they would certainly have

Digitized by Google

understood the relations existing between the Supreme Creator and the missionary spirit, sent to lead back men who had strayed, to the path of salvation and progress. Such is the meaning of the words of Jesus. It is certain that in your own days, amid the first beams of the New Revelation, you are still far from knowing the Father, inasmuch as you know not how to define him; but there is a great difference between defining him and knowing him.

(20) Jesus said these words in the Treasury, as he was teaching in the Temple; and no one took him, for his hour was not yet come.

You should not see anything fatalistic in these words. It was always the fixed intention of the chief men among the Jews to arrest Jesus; but as the fitting time had not yet arrived, they were always prevented from executing their design, by spiritual or magnetic action, according to circumstances. You are are aware that Jesus could act on the masses by his magnetic action, and likewise on those who were embittered against him. You also know that the elevated spirits who surrounded him were the faithful attendants who executed, not his orders, but a feeling still more rapid than thought, and of which human words and intelligence could give you no idea. The magnetic action of thought passed from spirit to spirit.

(21) Then Jesus said to them again, I am going away, and you shall seek for me, and shall die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come. (22) Then the Jews said, Will he kill himself, that he says, Where I am going you cannot come?

When Jesus was then addressing men whom he knew to be very backward, and who could not, therefore, even attempt to approach the spheres to which his nature recalled him, his real meaning was that no spirit could raise himself to his level; but the Jews thought that suicide, by violently and wilfully destroying the body, deprived the spirit of its prerogatives, and plunged it into annihilation. Those who listened to Jesus would have taken care not to imitate him, if he intended to annihilate himself, which was, from their point of view, the result of suicide. The notion of the Jews that suicide destroyed the soul as well as the body, was

Digitized by Google

based upon their annals and traditions, whence the learned Rabbis had derived much information, not directly, but by deduction.

(23) And he said to them, You are from below; I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.

Here Jesus expressly asserts his extra-human nature and origin, and the spiritual character of his presence and mission on your earth, though under the veil of the letter.

(24) "Therefore I told you that you should die in your sins, for if you do not believe that I am he, you shall die in your sins."

These words signify, "If you do not believe that I am a special messenger of God, who descended among you from the higher spheres to teach you the way of life, and if you do not abandon the devious paths on which you have entered, to advance on the luminous path which I open before you, you will remain stationary in darkness, and will not attain to the progress which can alone raise you towards God."

VERSES 25–45.

Continuation of Christ's Address to the Jews.

§ 28. We must still divide these verses, that we may give distinct and special explanations.

(25) Then they said to him, Who art thou? And Jesus said to them, That which I have already told you from the first.

Here again, under the veil of the letter, Jesus asserts his spiritual position as the founder of your planet, and the protector and ruler of everything which exists, arises, and depends upon it, in every kingdom of nature, subject to the superior impulse of the will of God, and the immutable laws which he has established from all eternity.

(26) "I have many things to say, and to judge concerning you; but he who sent me is true, and I speak to the world those things which I heard from him."

Jesus came among men to fulfil a mission of peace and love which very few would receive; and as the messenger of the Lord, he received divine impressions, and acted upon this superior influence. The words, "I speak what I have

Digitized by Google

heard from him," were intended to assert the inferiority of Jesus as compared with God, and likewise to affirm that he received direct impressions from him as his envoy.

(27) They did not know that he spoke to them of the Father. (28) Then Jesus said to them, When you shall have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall you know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself.

Jesus wished to state definitely, under the veil of the letter, what he had just said, and which the Jews did not and could not understand according to the Spirit.

The expressions of verse 28 had a twofold sense. They had a positive sense, relative to the punishment which would be inflicted on Jesus; and a prophetic sense, relative to the present Revelation, which is sent to show men him whom they have worshipped under an erroneous title, while they have neglected his counsels and precepts. The Revelation raises Jesus in the eyes of men, by restoring him to the position which he ought to occupy, without which the impossibility of the received opinions stretches a veil between man and his Saviour.

"When you shall have lifted up the Son of Man," therefore, means, "When you have lifted me up, in the sight of all, on the Cross of Calvary, and when you have learned that I am from above, and that I am not of this world, and after your human interpretations have made me both a man and a God; and finally, when you shall have accepted the Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which I promised and predicted, which will be given you in due time when you are able to receive it, you will restore me to the position which I ought to occupy, and you will then know, in spirit and in truth, what I am, because I only act by the will of God, being his agent and minister; and I am likewise his direct representative among men, being his envoy. I speak only what I have learned from him, for from him I derive the perfection which I have acquired; and also my prescience of the future."

(29) "And he who sent me is with me. The Father does not leave me alone, for I do always those things which please him."

During the earthly mission of Jesus, the purity of his

Digitized by Google

spiritual essence and his extra-human nature placed him in constant communion with him who had sent him. Thus Jesus, a pure spirit who had never erred, is always in communion with the superior principle whom in your human language you call God.

(30) When he said these things, many believed in him. (31) Then Jesus said to the Jews who believed in him, If you continue in my word, you are really my disciples. (32) And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

It is obvious that he who enters in the way of Christ, but stops short at the commencement, cannot call himself his disciple. He alone can be his disciple who follows him as closely as possible; and only he who perseveres shall know the truth, and the truth shall make him free. He shall know that it is only by work, justice, love and charity that he can progress, purify himself, and advance towards the knowledge of eternal truth; and he will find liberty in progress and purification, for he will acquire the power of acting both physically and morally in such a manner as to free himself from the bondage of sin. The truth, to men, is what is good in the practical work of human life; and everything which is just and right is truth. Everything is evil which turns man from justice, love, and charity, and from the spirit of union and brotherhood which are the only true and durable bases of liberty and equality; for these are the qualities which progressively raise the spirit from the tomb of the flesh, and gain it admission to the superior worlds.

(33) They answered him, We are the seed of Abraham, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? (34) Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that every one who committeth a sin is the slave of the sin. (35) And the slave does not remain in the house for the age, but the son remaineth for the age. (36) Therefore, if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

You can understand that the slave does not always remain in the house, for he has not finished his work, and must work at it again till he has finished. But he whom Jesus has emancipated has walked in the ways of the Lord. He has won his liberty, and is given the right to enjoy it; and he descends no more to the world of slavery.

Do not take this explanation literally, and imagine that

Digitized by Google

your planet is always destined to be the abode of masters and slaves, the powerful and the humble. The reign of liberty—human liberty—will at length arrive, but you must prepare the way for it.

Liberty! The sound of the word deafens you, and your obscured intelligence no longer comprehends its meaning. Liberty! To you this word means only change of masters, and different hands drawing the chains of abuses; but these chains always exist, whether cast from on high, or raised from below. Men! you will never attain to Liberty as long as you are not prepared to receive her into a society of brethren and a united family—the great human family, which is your entire humanity, and whose dwelling-place is your planet. Liberty is respect for the laws on the part of some, and mildness and justice on the part of others; and mutual help and aid on the part of all. It is a mutual association, moral, physical, and intellectual, which composes a continuous chain; and this beneficent chain will resist pride, avarice, envy, hatred, ambition, violence, and revolt. Liberty soars above your heads, but she will never descend upon you until she meets with hearts pure enough to receive her, and hands pure enough to lead her into all ranks of society.

(37) I know that you are the children of Abraham, but you seek to kill me, because my word does not abide in you. (38) I speak what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have seen with your father. (39) They answered and said to him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said to them, If you were the children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham. (40) And now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth, which I have heard from God; this did not Abraham. You do the works of your father. (41) Then they said to him, We are not born of fornication; we have one Father, God. (42) Then Jesus said to them, If God was your father, you would love me, for I proceeded forth and am come from God; for neither came I of myself, but he sent me. (43) Why do you not understand my speech? Because you cannot hear my word. (44) You are from your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him; when he speaketh what is false, he speaketh from his own, for he is a liar, and his father. (45) But because I speak the truth you do not believe me.

You should also be able to understand the meaning of

Digitized by Google

these words according to the spirit. Although figurative, they were appropriate to the intelligence of those to whom they were spoken, and to their prejudices and ideas, based on the interpretations given to their traditions; and they were also appropriate to the end which Jesus desired to attain.

"You wish to kill me," said Jesus. He insisted on this point, for he repeated the words, which the Jews understood to imply, "I am a mortal man like you," that he might always counterbalance the divinity which was to be attributed to him under the veil of the letter. We have already explained the reason for this belief, which nevertheless was to be disputed in due time, and to disappear before the rays of the New Revelation.

"I speak what I have seen with my Father." "I have descended from the higher spheres, and am always in communion with the Lord, and I therefore preach that pure morality which can alone lead men to the feet of the Eternal One; and which is practised in the higher spheres by the pure, superior, and good spirits."

"You do what you have seen with your father." Jesus alludes to the origin of the spirit, and the path he follows when he is free to choose his way. He mistakes it, and subjects himself to incarnation. The expressions, "Your father," and "You are the children of the devil," are figurative. In this place the devil is the purely symbolic personification of evil, which has its source in pride, envy and presumption. Then rebellion leads to the fall of the spirit, and makes it the son of sin, when it enters on a course of wrong-doing by its own free-will and deliberate action. Its sympathy for the inferior spirits, which has misled it, proceeds from its own disposition; and it is only after its fall that similar relations are established between them.

Thus, the men to whom Jesus spoke were "children of the devil." They were the "sons of sin," having been the children of rebellion; they had fallen, and being incarnate, they suffered punishment, the inevitable consequence of spiritual deviation; besides, they would fail again.

Digitized by Google

"You do what you have seen with your father." You have failed once, and you will fail again. "You do the works of your father." You continue in evil, for your works are always evil.

(V. 44.)—In the minds of the Jews, the words of Jesus aroused the recollection of the parable of Cain slaying his brother Abel. We say parable, for the figures of Cain and Abel are emblematic, like those of Adam and Eve, and relate to the origin of the spirit, its fall, and the consequences resulting from it. The posterity of Cain figuratively represent the succession of guilty spirits, who have failed, and who suffer incarnation on the inferior worlds. The emblematic figure of Cain represents the spirit who was guilty from his origin, having turned aside from the path which was open to him, and become the murderer of himself; for he has devoted himself to spiritual death, by condemning himself to incarnation; and he has also been the murderer of his brother, who by his own free-will and act has gone with him in the wrong course, and has established similar relations with him. Although these relations depend on the sympathy which his brother has experienced for him, and proceed from his own disposition, and thus the murder is the result of his brother's free will, he is, nevertheless, his murderer, having devoted him to spiritual death by his suggestions and influences.

In the idea of Jesus, the truth is goodness. It is the purity which the spirit preserves in the path of progress, which raises him in the spiritual hierarchy, and which leads him to perfection, and thus to God, who is Absolute Truth.

The lie is everything which is derived from evil; falsities, errors, and false doctrines, which mislead both in word and action.

The true meaning of the words of Jesus is as follows: "You, fallen spirits, are the sons of sin and rebellion, and you desire to yield to the inspirations of evil which have caused you to fall, and to fulfil your evil thoughts and designs by shedding the blood of the just."

(V. 37–43.)—The men to whom the Master spoke

Digitized by Google

were bound down by the opacity of their perispritic fluids in the inferior regions, delighting in their iniquitous surroundings, and constantly acting like impure and backward spirits.

(V. 42.)—If they had been more elevated, and thus truly the children of God, they would have loved Jesus, because there would have been a greater affinity, and therefore sympathy and attraction, between their fluids. Jesus was perfect and immaculate purity, and was therefore sent by God as his messenger to men.

"But when I tell you the truth," by preaching to you the pure morality which can alone lead men to the feet of the Eternal One; and by showing you the path of progress and purification, "you do not believe me," for you do not believe in my word and mission.

VERSES 46–59.

Conclusion of the Conversation between Jesus and the Jews.

(46) Which of you convicteth me of sin? And if I speak truth, why do you not believe me? (47) He who is from God listens to the words of God, therefore you do not listen because you are not from God. (48) Then the Jews answered and said to him, Do we not say well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? (49) Jesus answered, I have not a devil, but I honour my Father, and you dishonour me. (50) And I seek not my glory; there is one who seeketh and judgeth. (51) Verily, verily, I say unto you, If anyone shall observe my saying, he shall not see death in the age. (52) Then the Jews said to him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and thou sayest, If anyone shall observe my saying, he shall not taste death in the age. (53) Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead; and the prophets are dead; whom makest thou thyself? (54) Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is my Father who glorifieth me, of whom you say that he is your God. (55) And you know him not, and if I said that I knew him not, I should be like you, a liar; but I know him, and observe his word. (56) Abraham, your father, rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad. (57) Then the Jews said to him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? (58) Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am. (59) Then they took up stones to cast at him, but Jesus hid himself, and came out of the Temple, passing through the midst of them, and thus went his way.

§ 29. These verses are perfectly intelligible. The men to whom Jesus spoke were impure and backward spirits, who always understood his words literally, being incapable

Digitized by Google

of understanding them in spirit and in truth. They called Jesus a Samaritan, which they intended as the strongest expression of their hatred, contempt, and insult. They said he was possessed of a demon, and thus accused the direct messenger of God to men of being subjected to the worst influences of error and lying.

We must call your attention to those words of Jesus which require explanation, that men may understand the exact meaning, when the spirit is freed from the letter.

(V. 51.)—To the spirit in the path of progress, stagnation is death. Progress is life. "If anyone observes my word,"—that is, practises the pure morality which I preach without ever deviating from it, "he shall not die in the age;" his spirit will never remain stationary; he will progress continually, and will always advance towards perfection by purifying himself more and more, and will thus live. The idea of Jesus is wholly spiritual. It does not concern the life of the body but the life of the spirit.

In reply to the Jews, who asked Jesus if he was greater than Abraham and the prophets, and who he professed to be, he made a reply which was veiled by the letter, as usual, and was not to be understood by that and succeeding generations; for the true spiritual meaning was only to be revealed by the New Revelation, when men had become able to receive it.

(V. 54, 55.)—In these words Jesus gives men a lesson and example of humility, showing them that they ought not to presume on their personal importance, or on their superiority over their brethren, and teaching them that they derive their worth or elevation, as well as their existence, from God.

When Jesus said that he knew God, he affirmed, under the veil of the letter, that he was a pure spirit; for to know God is to know his essence, and to approach the Fire of Omnipotence and of all life; and this belongs only to the pure spirits.

(V. 56.)—Jesus alluded to his earthly mission, and the joy which the advent of the Messiah caused to the spirit of Abraham; for if this advent was expected by men, it was witnessed with great joy by all the spirits who were working

Digitized by Google

at the development and progress of your planet and its humanity under the direction of your ruler and protector.

The Jews always took the words of Jesus literally; and supposing that he spoke of the day of human birth, they said, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am."

Jesus thus proclaimed, under the veil of the letter, that he did not suffer the human incarnation of your planet, and that, beneath the envelope which he assumed to make himself visible to human eyes, he was always a free and independent spirit, belonging to a creation anterior to that of Abraham; and that he was really a spirit, both when the spirit of Abraham was created, and when the spirit of Abraham witnessed his appearance on earth as the Messiah. "Before Abraham was, I am;" my nature is extra-human, and my existence among you is apart from your humanity.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSES 1–12.

Cure of a Man Blind from his Birth.

(1) And passing by, he saw a man blind from his birth. (2) And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? (3) Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but that the works of God may be manifested in him. (4) I must work the works of the Father while it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work. (5) When I am in the world, I am the light of the world. (6) Saying these things, he spit on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said to him, (7) Go and wash in the pool of Siloam, which is, being interpreted, Sent. Then he went and washed, and came back seeing. (8) Then the neighbours, and those who had seen him before, that he was blind, said, Is not this he who sat and begged? (9) Others said, This is he; and others, It is like him; but the man himself said, I am he. (10) Then they said to him, How were your eyes opened? (11) The man answered and said, A man called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash; and I went and washed, and received sight. (12) Then they said to him, Where is this man? He says, I know not.

§ 30. When Jesus was about to accomplish his mission on earth, a company of spirits assembled, who were appointed to aid him in his mission, or to aid in the accomplishment

Digitized by Google

of his work. The man, blind from his birth, was one of those devoted spirits who were incarnated to contribute to the fulfilment of the Master's work. For this purpose, he had selected blindness from birth, as an expiation, and thus finished his trials.

The disciples asked Jesus if this man had sinned, or his parents, that he was born blind. But if the man's own sin were the cause of his being blind from birth, he must have already sinned as a man at the time of his birth. That is, he must have had a previous existence in which the sin was committed; which necessarily implies the pre-existence of the soul and reincarnation. As for the other alternative, is it conceivable that the fault of the parents should thus be laid on the child, and atoned for by his blindness?

The disciples did not think of this, but they unconsciously prepared men to understand the reply of Jesus, when his words should be explained in spirit and in truth. You must remember that the disciples were but little advanced in their incarnate state; and their spirit, under the restraints of the flesh, was burdened with matter. Philosophical considerations did not come within the scope of their thought or intelligence; and this shows that the question was asked by spirits who, so far as they were incarnate, were in a state of infancy.

Jesus answered, in the sense of the disciples' own words, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents." It is not the faults of this incarnation which he expiates; and still less those of his parents.

"But that the works of God should be manifested in him." It is necessary that the expiation imposed on every guilty spirit should run its course. This man does not suffer the punishment of the present life, nor does he atone for the sin of another, but he pays a debt which his spirit has contracted. The power of God is manifested in him: for his blindness is the expiation which he has selected for faults previous to his present incarnation, and the cure of his blindness is the end of his expiation; and he thus contributes to the fulfilment of the mission of the messenger of God.

Digitized by Google

There was no necessity for Jesus to anoint the eyes of the blind man with clay in order to effect the cure. The cure was effected by magnetic power, and he only used clay that he might tell him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The waters of the pool were considered healing, and Jesus sent the man whom he had cured there, that the fact might be more widely reported, for the place was greatly frequented.

(V. 4, 5.)—It is needful for me to do all the works which God has charged me to accomplish by my earthly mission, while it lasts.

I am the light which enlightens men—while I am among men; but the time is coming when my mission will cease; and no one can prevent its coming to an end.

VERSES 13–34.

The Blind Man and the Pharisees.

(13) They bring to the Pharisees him who was once blind. (14) And it was the Sabbath when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. (15) Then the Pharisees asked him again how he saw. And he said to them, He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see. (16) Then some of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath. Others said, How can a sinful man perform such a miracle? and there was a division among them. (17) They say again to the blind man, What sayest thou about him that he hath opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet. (18) Therefore the Jews did not believe that he had really been a blind man, and saw, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. (19) And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, whom you say was born blind; how then does he now see? (20) His parents answered them, and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; (21) But how he now sees we know not; or who has opened his eyes we do not know; he is of age; ask him, and let him speak for himself. (22) His parents said these things, because they feared the Pharisees, for the Jews had already arranged that if any one should assert that he was Christ, he should be cast out of the synagogue. (23) On this account his parents said, He is of age, ask him. (24) Then they asked the man who had been blind, a second time, and said to him, Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner. (25) Then he answered and said, I do not know if he is a sinner, but this I know, that I was blind, and now I see. (26) And they said to him again, What did he do to thee? how did he open thine eyes? (27) He answered them, I have told you already, and you would not listen; why do you wish to hear again? do you also wish to become his disciples? (28) Then they abused him, and said, You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. (29) We know that God spoke to Moses, but we know not whence this man is. (30) The man answered and said to them, For this is the wonderful thing, that you know not whence he is; and he has

Digitized by Google

opened my eyes. (31) And we know that God does not listen to sinners; but if any one is devout, and does his will, him he heareth. (32) It was never heard from the beginning of the age that any one opened the eyes of one who was born blind. (33) Unless this man was from God, he could do nothing. (34) They answered and said to him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

§ 31. These verses require no commentary. You may compare the circumstances with those which take place in your own day.

VERSES 35–41.

Jesus and the Blind Man.

(35) Jesus heard that he had been cast out, and found him, and said to him, Dost thou believe in the Son of God? (36) The man answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I should believe in him? (37) And Jesus said to him, Thou hast also seen him, and it is he who speaketh with thee. (38) And he said, Lord, I believe; and he did homage to him. (39) And Jesus said, For judgment am I come into this world, that they who see not might see, and that they who see might be made blind. (40) And those of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things, and said to him, Are we also blind? (41) Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you had no sin, but now you say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

§ 32. Jesus came into the world for judgment, because he came to enlighten men concerning the path which they ought to follow; and to preach the pure morality, which is the standard by which they must acquit or condemn themselves at the inward tribunal of conscience, by the serious examination of their words and actions.

(V. 39.)—The meaning of these words is wholly spiritual, and relates to moral, and not to physical and material blindness. They apply to all ages, for man should always strive to obtain spiritual sight by endeavouring to understand and practise the pure morality of the lessons and examples of the Master. These words have also a primary special application to the men who were living during the earthly mission of Jesus; and also to those who are living at the time of the revelation of the Spirit of Truth.

As regards the men then living, the material action of giving sight to a man who was born blind was the emblem of the object of the mission of Jesus, and of all the actions by which he appealed to the senses of material men, in

Digitized by Google

order to restore their spiritual sight, and to cure their moral blindness by his morality, teachings and examples. In saying "that those who see not might see," Jesus alluded to those who were deprived of material vision, and to whom he gave it, and who, thereupon recognized his mission, and perceived the spiritual light which enlightens the heart and intellect. He likewise alluded to those who although enjoying material sight were afflicted with moral blindness, and who beheld the deeds which he performed, recognized his mission, and perceived the spiritual light which would cure their moral blindness.

In saying "that they who see might be made blind," Jesus alluded to those who saw the actions which he performed, but would not believe them, nor recognize his mission, and thus plunged into darkness, because they could not distinguish objects in the light.

(V. 40, 41.)—Jesus alluded to the blind man whom he had cured, who was a devoted spirit, and had just witnessed the end of the expiation which he had chosen, and had recognized the mission of the Master.

"If you were blind"—that is in the place of this man, "you would have no sin, but now you say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." These last words follow from what Jesus had just said, "that they who might see might be made blind."

"But now you say you see." You say that you possess the material sight which enables you to perceive my actions, without being willing to believe in them, or to acknowledge my mission; therefore your faults, vices, and evil passions, which spring from your moral blindness, and which make you guilty, remain with you.

The Pharisees recognized the mission of Jesus in their inner consciousness, but they would not acknowledge it, thinking more of worldly good than what they regarded as the hypothetic benefits of heaven. You need not wonder at their conduct towards Jesus. Does not the history of the Jews show you how the prophets were treated when they came into collision with the powerful?

Digitized by Google

As regards the present era of the New Revelation, and the men now living, do you not find matters very much in the same condition as at the earthly mission of Jesus? Do not the spirits of the Lord, the organs of the Spirit of Truth, meet with the same reception as that accorded to Jesus? Is not the prophecy of Jesus respecting the advent of the present revelation received like that which announced the advent of the Messiah? Are there not some among you who witness physical and intelligent spirit-manifestations, and recognize the mission of the Spirits of the Lord, and the advent of the new era predicted and promised by the Master, and who perceive the spiritual light which comes to enlighten their hearts and intellect?

Are there not some among you who witness these manifestations and do not recognize the mission, nor the advent of the new era, but withdraw from the light, because they are unable to perceive objects in the light? Are there not Pharisees in your own days, who speak and act with respect to the New Revelation, and towards those who accept it, and propagate it by word and example, as the Pharisees spoke and acted towards Jesus and those who accepted his mission? Do you not see them labouring to plunge themselves into darkness by their own free-will, in order to protect their contemptible worldly interests? To such men the answer of Jesus to the Pharisees is applicable.

CHAPTER X.

VERSES 1–10.

Parable of the Door and the Sheepfold.

(1) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who enters not into the sheepfold through the door, but climbs up some other way, this is a thief and a robber. (2) But he who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (3) To him the porter opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. (4) And when he leads forth his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. (5) And they will not follow a stranger, but they fly from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. (6) Jesus spoke this parable to them, but they knew not what things they were which he spoke to them. (7) Then Jesus said to them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

Digitized by Google

(8) All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. (9) I am the door; if any man enter through me, he shall go in and out, and find pasture. (10) The thief cometh not except to steal and kill and destroy; I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.

§ 33. Jesus is the door of the sheepfold. It is he who opens the intelligence, enlightens it, and leads the spirit to the dwelling of the Father; to perfection.

Those who have not walked in his ways, but have turned men from them by inciting them to hatred, pride, vengeance, and cupidity, have been "thieves and robbers," and have not entered the human heart by the only door which can give access to the shepherd; love and self-renunciation.

The parable and the explanations given by Jesus were appropriate to the period, and to the men who heard him, and whom he desired to impress strongly. He called the attention of all to the false shepherds of the age, and to those of following generations, who called themselves his representatives and disciples; and pointed out the signs by which the true and false prophets might be recognized. He also proclaimed his full and absolute authority over your planet and its humanity, the salvation of men by practising his morality, and the greatness and object of his earthly mission.

(V. 1.)—He who is chosen to instruct men, and who instead of teaching them the pure morality of Jesus, leads them astray from the simple and direct paths of justice, love, and charity, is a thief and robber of souls, a false shepherd.

(V. 2.)—He who teaches and practises the morality of Jesus is the true shepherd.

(V. 3.)—The Lord opens his intelligence, and gives him light; and his instructions penetrate the hearts of the men who know him, and make them obedient to his call. "And he leads them forth" out of the path laid down by the false shepherds; and out of the sheepfold which they had turned into a den of darkness. He thus alludes to what had happened to the law of Moses, and to what would happen to the Christianity of Christ, before the New

Digitized by Google

Revelation came to recall men to the practice of the pure morality of the Master.

(V. 4.)—Those who walk in the steps of the true Shepherd, by practising the morality of Jesus, will no longer allow themselves to be turned aside, and will follow him with ardour.

(V. 5.)—Those who have been charmed with this divine harmony, will no longer permit themselves to be led astray by the discordant sounds of human voices, which seek to turn them aside from it.

(V. 6.)—Men can only arrive at perfection by practising the morality of Jesus, and walking in the paths which he has traced out for them by his teaching and example. They can only succeed by his aid, which develops their intelligence, and enlightens it by every means which the providence of God has put into his hands, and which he, the protector and ruler of your planet, dispenses according to the faculties and necessities of every man, and of every period.

(V. 8.)—This is figurative, and alludes to the various human missions which were more or less impeded by the weakness inherent in humanity, and which had not the power and importance of the divine mission of Jesus. Jesus speaks figuratively, because he alone has complete authority, and thus asserts its special character by an image which was strong enough to create a great sensation among the men who rejected him in the name of the prophets, and who, although expecting the Messiah, refused to recognize his advent.

"And the sheep did not listen to them." Is it not a fact that men have departed from the principles which the various messengers had impressed upon them? They have listened to them for the moment, but have wandered from them little by little.

Jesus has been rejected by many; but he has been received by a small number, which is increasing daily, and must multiply indefinitely now; for the time is coming when men will hear his voice, and when the transformation and puri-

Digitized by Google

fication of your planet and its humanity, will accomplish his predictions; and there will be but one fold and one shepherd.

(V. 9.)—If anyone follows my morality, and thus walks in my ways, he will purify himself, and follow the ascending course which leads the spirit to perfection. He will enter human life and come forth from it, and in all conditions he will find the bread which does not nourish the body but elevates the soul.

(V. 10.)—"The robber comes only to steal, to kill, and to destroy;" for you may observe that all previous missions have excited to bloodshed, whereas Jesus always preached peace, union, and fraternity. Although blood has been shed in his name, yet let it recoil upon the memory of those who called themselves his disciples, but who were only devouring wolves. Pray for those who have not yet expiated their sanguinary blindness—"I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly." Jesus came to bring men the means of regeneration by his earthly mission. This he did by his pure morality, which is the bread of life of the soul, in which it finds abundant nutriment, which strengthens, purifies, and elevates it.

VERSES 11–21.

The Good Shepherd.

§ 34. These verses are of great importance in connection with the extra-human life of Jesus; and also as regards his mission and its results. Divide them, and we will explain them separately.

(11) I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. (12) But the hireling, who is also not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flies, and the wolf seizes them, and scatters the sheep. (13) But the hireling flies, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

These figurative expressions apply to all ages. Those who were entrusted with feeding the flock of the Good Shepherd, did not feel strong enough to resist the vices by which they were attacked; and they abandoned themselves to them, as well as the flock which they should have

Digitized by Google

protected. But the Good Shepherd, the shepherd of souls, watches over his flock, and walks round them continually, urging with voice and gesture the faithful guardians on whom he can rely, and who aid him to gather together those who were liable to stray away. The Good Shepherd knows neither personal interest nor fatigue.

(V. 11.)—These words prepared men to understand the allusion which Jesus was about to make to his "death," and the events which followed.

(14) I am the Good Shepherd, and I know my own, and am known of mine. (15) As the Father knows me, I also know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. (16) And I have other sheep which are not of this fold; these also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

Here Jesus alludes to his earthly mission, and to the fruits which it was to yield, as well as to his spiritual mission as protector and ruler of your planet, and to its results.

The "sheep" of Jesus are all the spirits of your earth, whether incarnate or errant. The sheep which know him are those who practise his morality, and recognize his mission. The other sheep, who are not of this fold, but whom Jesus must bring in, are those who either do not practise his morality, or practise it, but do not recognize his mission. Yet they will not prove rebellious to progress, but will purify themselves continually more and more in the furnace of time and re-incarnation. They will thus perceive more and more of the light and truth which Jesus brought to men, and which the New Revelation is about to fan into a brighter flame. Thus, the thought of Jesus embraced the whole of your humanity, and included all generations of spirits on the path of purification; both those who were already incarnated on your earth before his earthly mission, those who were incarnate there at the time, and those who were still to be incarnated upon it. All these were destined to be obedient to his voice as the Messiah, and to the voices of the incarnate and errant missionary spirits, the organs of the Spirit of Truth; and all must rise from progress to progress, and from purification to purification, until they arrive at moral perfection. Then there will be only one

Digitized by Google

fold and one Shepherd, under the dominion of the law of love and unity; and then will Jesus, your protector and ruler, appear in his full spiritual glory as the visible sovereign of his purified creatures, on your equally purified planet. He will come as the Spirit of Truth, to lead his own to the life of pure spirits, to take their rank among the direct ministers of God as his active and devoted agents in the work of universal progress, life and harmony; for the purity which they have then acquired will enable them to live in constant activity, eternally drawing fresh progress in universal knowledge from the infinite source of all power, all love, all justice, all knowledge, and all truth.

(17) Therefore my Father loveth me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. (18) No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.

These words have not received sufficient attention, or been regarded as very important; but they confirm what we have already told you of the nature and origin of Jesus.

(V. 17).—"My Father has entrusted me to accomplish the great sacrifice, and the events which must follow in consequence of my earthly mission, as well as for the fulfilment of my spiritual mission. Thus I lay aside my apparent human life to resume the wholly spiritual life which belongs to me."

(V. 18.)—If Jesus had been a man of material flesh like you, he would have received death at the hands of men. Doubtless he might have offered himself as a victim, of his own free will, but he would nevertheless have suffered death by the action of the executioners. But Jesus, a fluidic, perispritic, and tangible incarnation, laid aside the life which he had assumed of his own free will. No one could deprive him of it, any more than men could take it from a spirit fluidically incarnated in the superior worlds, who had assimilated his fluidic envelope to the regions of your planet, to appear there visibly and tangibly. He voluntarily resumed the wholly spiritual life which belonged to him, by laying aside his fluidic envelope, just as the spirit, fluidically incarnated in the superior worlds, voluntarily resumes the

Digitized by Google

spiritual life which is natural to him by leaving the fluidic envelope which he has assimilated to appear visibly and tangibly on your earth.

Jesus thus, under the veil of the letter, implies his extra-human nature, and the fluidic nature of his perispritic covering, which could only suffer an apparent death—though it appeared to be real to men—because it was necessary that men should believe, first that he died for them as a man, and then as a God.

"I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again." I have power to lay down the apparently human life which I have taken up, and to resume it again, to appear among men according to the requirements of my earthly mission, and to return into space with the wholly spiritual life which belongs to me; I have power to lay down my apparently human life to consummate the Great Sacrifice, and I have power to take it up again to rise again, and to rise up from the earth before the eyes of my disciples when my earthly mission is finished.

All this results from the Divine Will, which has permitted the manifestation, and has thus sanctioned the accomplishment of my work for human progress.

(19) Then there was again a division among the Jews on account of these words. (20) And many said among themselves, He has a devil, and is mad; why do you listen to him? (21) Others said, These words are not like those of a demoniac; can a demon open the eyes of the blind?

These discussions will always arise when a truth which is novel in the eyes of those who suppose they know everything, claims its right to be recognized by humanity without having been sanctioned by the scientific authorities. At first, a few who are attracted by curiosity will come over to the side of the novelty, and will then attach themselves to it by conscientious conviction. These men will always be considered as simple-minded, ignorant, or foolish, until the truth has won its claim to recognition, and is, perforce, recognized and admitted by the learned societies, who will then pour out their contempt upon those who are still

Digitized by Google

unwilling to believe, at their bidding, what they have at last condescended to admit.

VERSES 22–42.

Jesus replies to the Accusations of the Jews.

(22) And it was the feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. (23) And Jesus walked in the Temple, in Solomon's Porch. (24) Then the Jews gathered round him, and said to him, How long do you keep us in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. (25) Jesus answered them, I have told you, and you will not believe. The works which I perform in the name of my Father, these bear witness to me. (26) But you do not believe, for you are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. (27) My sheep hear my voice, and I also know them. (28) And they follow me, and I also give them age-long life. And they shall not perish in the age; and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. (29) My Father who gave me them is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of the hand of my Father. (30) I and my Father are one. (31) Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. (32) Jesus answered them, I have shown you many good works from my Father; for which of these do you stone me? (33) The Jews answered him, saying, We stone thee, not on account of any good work, but that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. (34) Jesus said to them, Is it not written in your Law, I said, Ye are Gods? (35) If he called those Gods to whom the word of God came (and the writing cannot be broken), (36) Say ye to him whom the Father loveth, and hath sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am a Son of God? (37) If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. (38) But if I do, and if you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him. (39) Then they sought again to seize him, but he escaped from their hands. (40) And he went away again to the other side Jordan, where John was baptizing at first, and remained there. (41) And many came to him, and said, John performed no miracle, but all things whatsoever that John said about this man were true. (42) And many believed on him there.

§ 35. The explanations which you have already received should enable you to understand the meaning of these verses. We need only call your attention to those passages which require a special explanation.

(V. 24–28.)—These words of Jesus must not be isolated from those which he had spoken before, and which we have already explained (v. 14, 16, pp. 155, 156).

Everything in the Master's words is linked together, and forms an harmonious whole. The Jews to whom Jesus spoke were not his sheep, because they were impure and backward spirits, who did not practise the principles of justice, love, and charity, which had been preached to them

Digitized by Google

by Moses and the Prophets. Besides, in rejecting him they rejected also the pure morality which he proclaimed, not under a selfish aspect, as regards their nationality, but towards all men, whether Jews or Gentiles. They rejected his teaching, his example, and his mission, and thus did not listen to his voice, or follow him.

But although they were not then in the fold, they were all destined to be brought into it by the Good Shepherd. They were all called upon to practise the morality of Jesus, and to recognize his mission, and thus to behold his words accomplished in themselves. "My sheep know my voice, I know them, and they follow me. I give them age-long life, and they shall never be destroyed, and no one shall snatch them out of my hands." This must and will come to pass upon your earth, as regards the Jews, as well as all others who shall be obedient and persevering in the path of progress and purification, which will enable them to perceive more and more light and truth.

(V. 19–30.)—God has given them to Jesus, and God is above all, and no one can pluck them out of his hands. God has given Jesus power over your planet by appointing him its founder, ruler, and protector.

"My Father and I are one," said Jesus. There is unity of thought between God and Jesus, on account of the affinity which unites Jesus to the Creator, and which places him in direct fluidic communion with him.

(V. 31–36.)—The Jews accused Jesus of making himself equal to God, because he said, "I and my Father are one." They always understood his words literally, for they were unable to comprehend them. When the answer of Jesus is understood in spirit and in truth, it excludes the divinity which they accused him of arrogating to himself; and it also asserts that he is, like the Jews who brought the charge against him, one of God's creatures, deriving his being, like them, from the Father, the uncreated Creator, the only God; for he had originally the same Divine origin as all others, as regards his spiritual essence, although his mission, purity, and power, render him superior to all others on your planet.

Digitized by Google

(V. 34–36.)—This reply, opposing the letter by the letter, was peremptory, but appropriate to the accusation, which the Jews based on a misconception; and was fitted to baffle and refute their accusation. Under the veil of the letter it contained the elements of the full explanation of the words of Jesus, in spirit and in truth, when men had become capable of receiving it.

The words quoted by Jesus respecting those to whom the word of God is addressed, "I said, Ye are gods," were intended to raise men in their own eyes, by showing them the links which connected them with the Divinity. "Ye are Gods," in the sense that you are formed (spiritually) of the vital principle emanating from God; and when you are once created, you are bound to him by the infinity of your existence. Thus, you participate in the Divinity, in the sense that you become as eternal as Itself; but you can enjoy your prerogatives (that is, find yourselves in direct fluidic communion with God, and one with him in thought) only so far as your perfection shall have deserved it. "You are gods," in the sense that the spiritual essence which emanates from God, has its inheritance in eternity. It derives from him both its principle of intelligence, and the fluidic principle which renders the spirit free, independent, and responsible, to be led on to its eternal individuality, from the infinitely little to the infinitely great; for eternity in evil would no longer be Divinity. Therefore, those to whom God has specially addressed his word are called "gods," as being further on the path of infinite perfection than others.

Thus Jesus claimed, in the eyes of men, to participate in the Divinity, in the same manner as every spiritual essence, and to enjoy the prerogatives which he had gained by his perfection, being in direct fluidic communion with God, and one with him in thought.

After the words, "I said, Ye are gods," the Psalm adds, "and ye are all sons of the Most High." Jesus confined himself to saying to the Jews, "I said, Ye are gods." You can understand why he did not finish the verse. Besides

Digitized by Google

its being inappropriate to the object which he desired to attain, his doing so would only have led to a fresh discussion with men who were unable to understand the words of Scripture according to the Spirit, and the manner in which the Master applied them to rebut their accusation.

Truly "Ye are gods, and ye are all sons of the Most High." You participate in the Divinity, for, as we have just explained, you proceed from God, and you are all his creatures. You shall all, guilty children, prodigal sons, return to the Father's house, and the Father himself is standing on the threshold to welcome you with open arms.

You now understand the sense and meaning of the answer of Jesus in spirit and in truth. "Is it not written in your Law, that all spirits derive their being from God, and are from him, and thus participate in his Divinity? Thus, all are his creatures, and all will individually return to him by the word which he addresses to them, and by the perfection which they shall have deserved. If it is thus (and the Scripture cannot be destroyed), why do you say that I blaspheme? God has sanctified me, because I have deserved perfection by my works, and he has sent me as his messenger to proclaim his word to you. Why say you then that I blaspheme when I call myself the Son of God, by the purity and perfection which I derive from him; a creature united to the Creator by the spiritual affinity which permits me to be in direct fluidic communion with him, and thus one with him in thought?"

(V. 37, 38.)—Jesus spoke these words for the future as well as for the present, and more especially for the period of the revelation of the Spirit of Truth which he predicted and promised (which is the present revelation), and the period which is to follow.

Men, whomsoever you are, who do not yet believe, at least believe in his works by practising his morality, that you may finally recognize the position which he occupies with respect to God. You will then know and believe that his purity places him in direct communion with the Creator; and that he was his celestial messenger, the promised Messiah,

Digitized by Google

who descended among men, and is the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet, who watched over it from its formation. You will thus finally know and believe, because you will progress and purify yourselves, and will thus receive light and truth.

(V. 39.)—This event furnishes additional evidence of the extra-human nature of Jesus. He escaped from the hands of the infuriated Jews, who desired to stone him, and who surrounded him on every side, by laying aside his tangibility.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSES 1–45.

Raising of Lazarus.

(1) And a certain Lazarus was sick at Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (2) And it was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. (3) Then the sisters sent to him, saying, Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick. (4) And when the Lord heard it, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it. (5) And Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. (6) Then, when he had heard that he was sick, he remained two days longer in the place where he was. (7) Then after this, he saith to the disciples, Let us go again into Judæa. (8) The disciples say to him, Rabbi, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and art thou going there again? (9) Jesus answered, Art there not twelve hours in the day? If any one walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. (10) But if any one walks at night, he stumbles, because there is no light in him. (11) He said these things, and after this he says to them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awaken him. (12) Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleeps, he will recover. (13) But Jesus spoke of his death, and they thought that he spoke of the repose of sleep. (14) Then said Jesus to them plainly, Lazarus is dead. (15) And I am glad on your account, that I was not there, that ye may believe; but let us go to him. (16) Then said Thomas, who is called Didymus, to his fellow-disciples, Let us go too, that we may die with him. (17) Then Jesus came, and found that he had already been four days in the tomb. (18) Now Bethany was not far from Jerusalem, about fifteen stadia off. (19) And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them about their brother. (20) Then when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she met him, but Mary sat in the house. (21) Then said Martha to Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. (22) But even now I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give it thee. (23) Jesus says to her, Thy brother shall rise again. (24) Martha says to him, I know that he shall rise at the Resurrection at the last day. (25) Jesus said to her, I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in me shall live, even if he die. (26) And every one living who believeth in me, shall not die in the age; dost thou believe

Digitized by Google

this? (27) She says to him, Yea, Lord; I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, who cometh into the world. (28) And saying these things, she went and spoke to her sister Mary privately, saying, The Teacher has arrived, and asks for thee. (29) When she heard this, she rose up quickly, and went to him. (30) And Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was at the place where Martha had met him. (31) Then the Jews who were with Mary in the house, and comforting her, saw her rise up and go out quickly, and followed her, saying, She is going to the tomb, to weep there. (32) Then when Mary came to where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. (33) Now when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he groaned in spirit, and was himself troubled, (34) And said, Where have you laid him? They say to him, Lord, come and see. (35) Jesus wept. (36) Then said the Jews, See how he loved him. (37) And some of them said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have also caused that this man should not have died? (38) Then Jesus, again groaning in himself, cometh to the tomb. And it was a cave, and a stone lay over it. (39) Jesus saith, Take away the stone. Martha, the dead man's sister, saith to him, Lord, he stinketh already, for he has been buried four days. (40) Jesus saith to her, Did I not say to thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? (41) Then they removed the stone from where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father I bless thee that thou hast heard me. (42) And I know that thou hearest me always, but I said it on account of the multitude who are standing round, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. (43) And saying these things, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. (44) And the dead man came forth, his hands and feet bound with grave clothes, and his face bound round with a napkin. Jesus saith to them, Loose him, and let him go. (45) Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and saw the things which Jesus did, believed.

§ 36. The men who believed that the son of the widow of Nain, and the daughter of Jairus, were really dead, and raised again in the sense which men attach to the idea, by the return of the spirit into the decaying corpse, would also believe in the real death and resurrection of Lazarus, when he came out of the cave where he had been laid four days previously.

Lazarus was not dead, any more than the two others. It was simply a case of apparent death, although men regarded it as real. Lazarus appeared to all but Jesus to be dead; but Jesus declared that his sickness was not unto death. He was sleeping, like the daughter of Jairus; and Jesus went to awaken him. The case of Lazarus, and its attending circumstances, appeared to men to be one of the greatest acts of the mission of Jesus. It made them acknowledge

Digitized by Google

that he was the Messiah, the messenger of God, and caused them to accept his mission, that it might yield its fruits both for the present and future generations, as well as at the time of the present Revelation of the Spirit of Truth. This event, which was called a "miracle," was one of the foundations of the divinity which men attributed to Jesus.

Martha and Mary also believed that Lazarus was dead; for they both said to Jesus, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Did not the Jews come to console them for the loss of their brother, and to weep with them? And did they not say to each other, "See how he loved him. Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have caused that this man also should not have died?"

Does not the Evangelist, who shared with others the belief in the real death of Lazarus, reproduce the human interpretation of the event, as in the case of the widow's son, and of the daughter of Jairus, by saying, "Martha, the dead man's sister;" and "the dead man came forth," &c.?

What all others believed, the disciples, who were present at the event, also believed. If you follow the Gospel narrative attentively, you will see the letter on one side, and the spirit on the other. On one side you will see the opinions and interpretations of men, and on the other, the words of Jesus veiled by the letter. You will see that Lazarus was really dead in the eyes of men, and raised again in the sense which they attached to the word. But you will see that in the eyes of Jesus, Lazarus was only apparently dead. He was sleeping, and Jesus went to awaken him, and did so. You will see that Jesus declared that he was performing one of the most important actions of his earthly mission, and united his veiled teaching with the action itself, which was also veiled from the comprehension of the men of that period, and of future generations, and could only be explained when you were fitted to understand it.

When Martha and Mary sent to inform Jesus that Lazarus was sick, he said, "This sickness is not unto death."

Digitized by Google

Consequently, Lazarus was not dying; and although men believed that he had died of his sickness, it was not so in reality, but only appeared to their eyes to be so. This death was only apparent in the eyes of Jesus; but because men were to believe that Lazarus was really dead, and raised again by the power of Jesus, he added, "but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." This implies "It is only to demonstrate, before the eyes of men, the power of God whose instrument I am, through the action which I am about to perform; and thus only for his glory, by developing faith in him in their hearts. Men shall believe from this that I am the Messiah, and the messenger of God, that the mission which he has given me shall be accepted and yield its fruits; and I am thus glorified by this action."

It appears strange to men who regard the letter only, and humanize everything in the mission of Jesus, that Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus, and yet knowing that Lazarus was ill, and being able to cure him, he remained where he was for two days, instead of going to him immediately with all haste.

Jesus loves all men, being the Good Shepherd, as he says himself; but it is recorded that he loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus, as a lesson and example, teaching men that those who walk in the ways of the Omnipotent Creator draw near to him, and establish with him and his celestial envoy, relations corresponding to those of friendship in your humanity.

You are aware that Lazarus and his sisters were devoted spirits, who were incarnated to aid in the fulfilment of the earthly mission of the Master; and Jesus delayed in order that the action which he was about to perform might take place under circumstances foreseen and designed to make a deeper impression upon men. After this, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go again into Judæa." But they did not comprehend the conditions of his mission, nor the hidden motive which had delayed his departure, and answered, "Rabbi, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and

Digitized by Google

art thou going there again?" Then Jesus answered, always veiling his meaning under the letter, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any one walks in the day he does not stumble, becauses he sees the light of this world. But if any one walks at night, he stumbles, because there is no light in him."

In the thought of Jesus, these words had a twofold meaning, one personal to himself, and the other including a lesson for men. In the former sense they imply, "Is not my mission fixed, and must not all the acts connected with it be fulfilled? I work for its accomplishment as is necessary, and I do not wander from the path, because I have the will of God as a lamp to enlighten and guide me here below; but if I listened to your words, I should place myself beyond my mission, and wander from the path, because I should no longer obey the will of God, who is the light without which I can do nothing to accomplish my work."

But these words also include a lesson for men. Has not human life its limits for every incarnate spirit, whether it is a life of trials or expiations, or a mission; and ought not man to complete his trials or his mission while it lasts? He who fulfils the trials which he has chosen, or the mission which is entrusted to him during his human life, has not failed, because he has been faithful to the inspirations of his conscience, and has been aided and directed by good spirits whom the Lord has sent to him. But he who wanders from the path of his trials or mission, has failed, because he has yielded to evil influences which have led him astray.

After speaking thus to his disciples, Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I am going to awake him." Lazarus was then already dead to the eyes of men, and his body had been laid in the cave which was to form his tomb. Jesus expressed this in his next reply; for the disciples were to share the opinion of others respecting the real death of Lazarus, as well as of the widow's son, and of the daughter of Jairus.

Digitized by Google

His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will recover." And Jesus answered, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad on your account that I was not there, that you might believe." The full meaning of this reply is as follows:—

"Lazarus is dead, in your eyes, as well as in those of others; he is dead to all eyes but mine; but to me he sleeps, like the daughter of Jairus, whom you also supposed to be dead. I am about to awaken him, and not to raise him from the dead, in the sense in which you understand the term, for he is not actually dead, although men believe him to have died of his sickness; and I told you before that his sickness is not unto death."

Therefore Jesus added, "I rejoice for your sakes that I was not there, but waited for two days to make a deeper impression on men, that you, as well as others, should believe that Lazarus is dead, and that he was restored to life by the return of the spirit into a corpse that had already lain in the tomb four days; you shall therefore believe that I am the Messiah, and shall believe in my earthly mission, and consequently in your own, which you have to accomplish." Jesus thus told his disciples plainly, according to the Spirit, what it was needful for them, as well as others, to believe.

When I myself, John the Evangelist, said, "Jesus spoke of his death, but they supposed that he spoke of the repose of sleep," I expressed, under unconscious spiritual influence, as it was intended I should, the idea which men attributed to the words of Jesus, and the human interpretation which they placed upon them.

While the apostles, the disciples, and the people were incarnate, they were incapable of explaining the nature of this action, which they regarded as a miracle, for they believed that Lazarus was really dead. And this human belief, which Jesus was not to correct, was necessary then, being useful at the time, and innocuous in the future, for the beloved Master had arranged and cared for everything. This belief was necessary until your own times, when the era of the New Revelation is unfolding; and it contributed greatly to the acceptance of the mission of Jesus, and to

Digitized by Google

the development of the fruits which it was to yield, according to the conditions and necessities of human progress.

Thus, the reply of Jesus was fitted to be interpreted either according to the letter, or according to the Spirit. If Jesus had shown his disciples the whole meaning of his words, and avoided any contradiction between them, he would have been obliged to explain how and why it was that Lazarus was dead to them, and not to him. But it could not be thus. Jesus was not to reveal spiritual secrets to men, because they were not yet fitted to receive them, and to make a good use of them. He therefore addressed them in the only language which they would be able to understand for many centuries, and which, being given up to human interpretations, prepared men for the future period of the New Revelation, which following on studies and observations in human magnetism and somnambulism, has initiated you into spiritual science and the secrets of the other world, and has thus fitted you to receive the true explanation of the words and actions of Jesus.

Lazarus was really dead to all except Jesus; for none but Jesus, or those to whom he had delegated the power, would have been able to stay the spirit when it was about to take its flight to the ethereal regions. Human science has frequently investigated the effects of a prolonged state of catalepsy. While it lasts, the spirit leaves the body; and if the period of its return is retarded, the link which binds it to its prison is ultimately broken, and the body remains materially dead, while the spirit recovers its original spiritual life.

Lazarus lay in this state of complete catalepsy for several days. The fluidic bond of the perisprit, which unites the spirit to the body, became more and more attentuated, being no longer sustained by the vitality of matter. Jesus waited for this extreme limit, that the sight of the powerful action of his will might make a deeper impression on the beholders. Lazarus was thus dead to all except Jesus, for although the link which bound the spirit to the body still existed, it was become so feeble that the action of Jesus only could restore and re-establish life.

Digitized by Google

The spirit of Lazarus was submissive and devoted, like those of the widow's son, and of the daughter of Jairus, and was prepared to return to the body; but the body which he had left needed the powerful action of the Master's will to imbue it with the fluids which were necessary to immediately restore its nearly extinct force and vitality.

Let not those who worship the letter say that if we deny the real death of Lazarus, the widow's son, and the daughter of Jairus, and their "resurrection" in the sense which men attached to the word, but which Jesus never sanctioned, we accuse Jesus of trickery and lying, and of having deceived the Apostles, the disciples, and the multitude, as well as the Evangelists, and all those who have understood his words to imply real death, and a resurrection by the return of the spirit to a decaying corpse. There was neither trickery or lying; and who dare blacken the name of Jesus by connecting it with such words?

Men have fallen into error on account of their not understanding the thought underlying the words of Jesus, and the nature and character of the action which he performed, and the real existence of life, though latent, in the supposed dead bodies of Lazarus and others. Men have believed that Lazarus was really dead, because they isolated the words of Jesus, "Lazarus is dead," from the context, and understood them literally, without reflecting on what he said before and afterwards. They have not understood that the words of Jesus cannot be rationally interpreted without being considered as a whole, in such a manner as to be brought into perfect harmony, and not in such a way as to contradict each other. They have not understood that when Jesus said, "This sickness is not unto death; our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go to awaken him," Jesus himself qualified the reply which he afterwards made to the remark of his disciples, "Lord, if he sleeps he will recover." They have not reflected that when Jesus said, "Lazarus is not dead," he was merely expressing the opinion of men, and not his own, which he had already expressed, and was again about to declare. They did not understand the motive and object

Digitized by Google

of the words of Jesus, and the manner in which they were designed to serve both the present and the future, until they should be explained at the time of the present revelation.

In order to establish the real death of Lazarus, men have quoted the reply of Jesus to his disciples, and have thus rendered the whole of his words contradictory. On this account alone, their human interpretation is necessarily false, just as the human interpretation of the words of Jesus relative to "the end of the world, and its signs" is likewise obviously false. When his disciples asked, "Tell us what shall be the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the world," Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you that this generation shall not pass away till all these things shall be fulfilled." (Matthew xxiv. 33, 34.) Jesus could not reveal the hidden sense of these words, any more than that of those relating to Lazarus. They were left to human interpretations, and were destined to be interpreted at first according to the letter, and afterwards explained in spirit and in truth by the revelation which the Master had predicted and promised.

The Apostles were only to know what they were able to receive in their incarnate state, and what it was necessary for them to know and understand, and teach to the men of that age in pursuance of the mission which they had to fulfil. The Evangelists, like the Apostles, possessed the simplicity of Faith. They were docile instruments of the Lord, and did not seek to go further than they were led, lest they should go astray. They were inspired historical mediums, and said what it was necessary for them to say under unconscious spiritual influence; and like your own mediums, they used the words at their disposal to relate the events which took place, and the words spoken during the mission of Jesus, as well as the opinions and interpretations of the men who were then living.

Jesus could not explain the sense concealed under his words respecting the end of the world, which is, as you know, as follows:—"There are some of this generation of spirits, now incarnated, and to whom I speak, who will be living again on your earth at the predicted time of the end

Digitized by Google

of the world;" "the end of the world," being also itself a veiled expression, which was only to be interpreted at the time of the New Revelation. He could not explain this without revealing to men the spiritual secrets of the other world, which they were unfitted to receive, being incapable of supporting them, and turning them to good account. At that time it would have been premature, and contrary to the methods of progress which your humanity was to follow for centuries, to reveal the natural and immutable law of re-birth, and the principles and consequences of reincarnation.

In like manner, the words of Jesus respecting Lazarus could not have been explained without revealing to men a long series of mysteries which they were unfitted to receive, and which could only be explained when spirits had become fitted by time, spiritual knowledge, and reincarnation to receive the light of the present revelation.

Let those who follow the letter strive to grasp the vast horizons of the present and the future which were revealed to the eyes of Jesus, and embraced in his thoughts, words and actions; and let them understand that the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. Let them understand that during his earthly mission Jesus gave the men of the age what they were able to receive, and veiled from their eyes by the letter what they were not qualified to grasp according to the Spirit, and that he arranged everything in accordance with the conditions of the progress of your humanity, both in the present and future, so that each epoch should receive what it was able to bear; while everything was also prepared for the progressive revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which he predicted and promised.

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was met by Martha; and we must now explain the spiritual meaning of the words which passed between them.

"Lord," said Martha, "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

She believed that her brother was dead, and was permitted to believe so for the same reason as the disciples and all others.

Digitized by Google

Jesus answered, "Thy brother shall rise again."

Jesus always used the words "rise again," and "resurrection," figuratively, in a sense hidden from men, and with different meanings, according to circumstances, either in cases of apparent death, or in his teachings, but never in the sense of the return of the spirit into a decaying corpse, after real death, which was the sense in which men understood it, according to the state of their intelligence.

"Your brother will rise again, returning to bodily life and its conditions" (He had already said to his disciples, "This sickness is not unto death—Lazarus sleeps, and I go to awaken him.") "Your brother shall rise again to the eyes of the men who believe him dead, in the sense in which they understand the word 'resurrection;' and he will also rise again in your eyes; for you also believe him to be dead."

The reply of Jesus presented itself to the mind of Martha in a two-fold sense; and might be understood either of the actual resurrection of a dead man, or of the resurrection which shall take place at the last day. Martha understood these words according to the popular Hebrew ideas, and the Catholic doctrine of the Last Judgment founded upon them, which only admit the complete resurrection of body and soul, in the case of the resurrection of the dead, and think that it can only take place at the end of the time fixed for the duration of your planet.

You find Jesus continually opposing this idea, and reminding the Jews that the soul alone exists in the eyes of God, and that the soul is the intelligent and responsible being, while the body is the tomb in which it is buried for a time; for you may notice that Jesus often speaks allegorically of spiritual death, when alluding to material incarnations, which suspend all memory in the spirit who suffers them.

You may remember that the belief in the immortality of the soul was not firmly established among the Jews, but was admitted by many; by some as an hypothesis, by others as an article of faith, and by others again, out of deference to popular superstitions. This opinion had spread widely

Digitized by Google

since the time of the Maccabees, who had revived and maintained it; but it was not believed by all.

When Martha said, "I know that he will rise again in the Resurrection at the last day," Jesus answered, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believeth in me, though he die, shall live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall not die in the age; believest thou this?"

Martha understood these words literally, as alluding to an actual resurrection of him who was dead, and might be restored to life, by the power which she supposed Jesus to possess, and she therefore answered, "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, who comest into the world."

But the meaning of these figurative words was only to be explained in spirit and in truth by the present revelation. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life; for it is by practising the morality which he preached, and which he personified by teaching and example, that the spirit succeeds in freeing itself from spiritual death, both in the errant and incarnate states. After the spirit is separated from the body, it returns to the clairvoyant life which it possessed before. If it has lived, before God, as a good man on the earth, its clairvoyance becomes more and more enlarged, its faculties become developed, and it may, according to its merits, be exempted from returning to your earth of oblivion; whereas, a spirit who has buried himself deeper and deeper in evil, has to suffer spiritual death after material death. His intelligence is darkened, and he neither recovers the memory of the past, nor the clairvoyance of the future, until he has returned to better thoughts. Thus, material incarnation is spiritual death, because it blots everything from the memory of the spirit who suffers it; and there is another spiritual death of the spirit after leaving the body, as explained above.

He who believes in Jesus (that is, practises the morality which he has preached, and the instinct of which is planted in the heart of every man), though he is dead shall live. He shall not die the spiritual death; for after material death,

Digitized by Google

he shall return to the clairvoyant life which he possesed before his incarnation, and this clairvoyance will extend further and further as his faculties develop. Whoever lives, and believes in Jesus (that is, practises his morality without ever deviating from it) shall not die, but live for ever; he will not return to spiritual death, but will be freed from material incarnations.

But we repeat again, for we cannot insist too much upon a point of such importance, that when Jesus said, "He who liveth and believeth in me," did not threaten everyone with spiritual death who refuses to range himself under his banner by taking the name of a Christian. Such a sentence would be a monstrous assertion in the mouth of him who was the type of all charity. These words always relate to the natural law of love, fraternity, and reverence towards the Lord, which is written in the heart of every creature, and which manifests itself by actions corresponding to the intelligence of man, and the surroundings into which he is born.

Every man, whatever his opinions or his external religion, is a "Christian" if he loves his fellows, and endeavours to do them as much good as possible, making every effort to improve himself, and to aid in the progress of his brethren. He is then a Christian, being a follower of Christ, and one of his sheep.

Christianity, properly so-called, and as you are taught, is a very, very narrow fold! and can only include so small a proportion of humanity that it might be said that the universe is rejected, if none but the "Christians" are saved. The Christianity of Jesus is the Beautiful and the Good wherever it is found, and wherever it is unselfishly practised for the love of humanity.

Mary was informed of the arrival of Jesus by her sister, and went to meet him at the same place where Martha had met him; and the Jews who were with her followed; and she also said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

Mary and the Jews believed that Lazarus was dead; and

Digitized by Google

you are told that when Jesus saw their tears, he groaned in spirit, and was troubled; and said, "Where have you laid him?" They answered, "Come and see;" upon which Jesus wept. This was the human aspect of the circumstances, which, together with the remarks of the Jews among themselves, was reproduced in the narrative.

Jesus, the type of gentleness and love, gave men a proof of his tenderness and sympathy for human sufferings.

Do not suppose that the breaking of the bonds which unite you to the flesh sunders all sympathies. Do you not perceive that the good spirits who surround you are afflicted at your sorrows, and rejoice in your joys within the limits of purity? How much more should he who broods over you, as it were, with his love, that you may one day come forth radiant with purity? Should he not feel pity for you? Jesus let those around him perceive that he shared in their grief, that he might give men a palpable proof of his tenderness.

He knew perfectly well where Lazarus had been laid, but under these circumstances, as in all others, it was necessary for the fulfilment of his mission, that he should allow men to believe in his humanity, as he allowed them to believe in the death of Lazarus.

Jesus went to the tomb, and then said to the people around him, "Take away the stone." Martha said, "Lord, he stinketh already, for he has been dead four days."

She believed that Lazarus was dead, and as she was not in the cave which formed his tomb, it was natural for her to suppose this, from the length of time that had elapsed since the apparent death of Lazarus, which she thought to be real. Lazarus has suffered from a putrid fever; but the body was not putrid in the sense that Martha supposed, for as actual death had not yet taken place, decomposition had not commenced.

Then Jesus answered: "Did I not say to thee that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" Martha connected these words with what Jesus had said to her before, when she met him, and understood them literally. These words meant, taken according to the letter, "Did I not say

Digitized by Google

to thee that if thou believest in my mission, and in the power which God has given me as his envoy, that thou shouldst see thy dead brother raised again by my power?"

But these words were veiled by the letter, and should not be separated from those which Jesus addressed to his disciples before going to Bethany. When his thought is explained in spirit and in truth, the words signify, "As I said to my disciples, Lazarus sleeps, but I am going to wake him. His sickness is not unto death, but only for the glory of God, and that his Son may be glorified thereby. It is only to manifest the power and glory of God, whose instrument I am, before the eyes of men, by developing faith in him in their hearts, and in order that men should believe that Lazarus is dead, and that I raised him again, in the sense in which they understand it. They will thus believe that I am the Messiah, in order that the mission which God has given me should yield its appropriate fruits. You will behold the action which I am about to perform; and you will see the men who believe like you that Lazarus is dead, believe that he has been raised again, receive faith in God, and believe like you that I am the Christ, the Son of the living God, who is come into the world."

After the stone was taken away, Jesus confirmed what he had said to his disciples, according to the Spirit, when he announced the motive and object of the act which he was about to accomplish. Raising his eyes to heaven, he pronounced these words, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me," in that this act of my mission is about to be accomplished. "And I know that thou hearest me always," that my mission must be fulfilled in all points as thou hast given it me, "but for the sake of these I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me."

"Then he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! And immediately Lazarus came forth with his hands and feet bound with grave clothes, and his face bound up with a napkin. Then Jesus said to those around, Loose him, and let him go."

The death of Lazarus was simply apparent, though it

Digitized by Google

would certainly have been complete, but for the intervention of Jesus, for the body was exhausted by the disease; but the spirit had not entirely left it. It was still bound to it by a slender thread, which might be compared to a film of caoutchouc, stretched till it is just on the point of breaking. Jesus then recalled the spirit of Lazarus, who joyfully resumed his chain, for it was a means of promoting the great work which the Christ had undertaken; and Jesus, while recalling the prisoner, restored by his powerful will the prison of which he was to resume possession. Consequently he exerted a magnetic action on the body to restore it to health, and a spiritual action on the spirit of Lazarus, to recall it and to restore the fluidic cord.

We have already told you in speaking of the son of the widow of Nain, and of the daughter of Jairus, what we will now repeat. God never compels the spirit to unite itself to corruption, and his immutable will never derogates from the immutable natural laws which he has established from all eternity. When real death has taken place, and the spirit has entirely abandoned the body which it has left, by the separation of the spirit and perisprit from the body, it can no more resume corporeal life, except by reincarnation.

VERSES 46–57.

Conspiracy against Jesus.

(46) But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them what Jesus had done. (47) Then the chief priests and Pharisees assembled a council, and said, What shall we do, for this man works many miracles. (48) If we let him alone thus, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation. (49) And one of them, named Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, (50) You know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should be destroyed. (51) And this he said, not of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation. (52) And not for that nation alone, but also that he should gather together in one the children of God who were dispersed. (53) Therefore, from that day they took counsel together that they might put him to death. (54) Therefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed thence into the country near the desert, to a city called Ephraim, and dwelt there with his disciples. (55) And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and many went up to Jerusalem from

Digitized by Google

the country before the Passover, that they might purify themselves. (56) Then they sought for Jesus, and said to each other as they stood in the Temple, What think you; will he come to the feast? (57) And the chief priests and Pharisees also gave command that if any one knew where he was, he should tell it, that they might seize him.

§ 37. These verses are perfectly intelligible. We need only call your attention to the fears expressed by the chief priests and Pharisees, and to the words of Caiaphas, and the Evangelist's observations upon them.

The Jews supposed that if Jesus continued his work, he would gather the people of Israel under his flag, and free them from the Roman yoke. Such was the popular report; and Caiaphas being a leading man among the Jews, knew that the nation was incapable of regaining its freedom, and proposed to sacrifice this pretended leader, to save the rest of the people who were in danger of being overwhelmed by the Roman legions. It was, therefore, with a view to the present material interests of the nation, that he prophesied concerning the mission of Jesus and its results, when he said, "You do not consider that it is expedient that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish."

John says that Caiaphas did not say this of himself. He spoke under unconscious inspiration, like many other persons who suppose that what they say proceeds from themselves, but who have received inspiration, and are directed by it. Caiaphas considered that it was needful for Jesus to die, to save the people from rushing upon their own ruin by rebelling against the Roman dominion.

But the spirit who guided his inspiration, gave the words a prophetic meaning and application, which John, likewise under unconscious spiritual inspiration, quotes as referring to the mission of Christ to the human race.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSES 1–11.

Mary perfumes the feet of Jesus.

(1) Then Jesus came to Bethany six days before the Passover, where Lazarus was, who was dead, and whom he raised from the dead. (2)

Digitized by Google

Then they made him a supper there, and Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him. (3) Then Mary, having taken a pound of essence of spikenard, very precious, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. (4) Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, who was about to betray him, (5) Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred denarii, and given to the poor? (6) But he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and carried what was put into it. (7) Then Jesus said, Let her alone; she hath kept this for the day of my burial. (8) For you have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always. (9) Therefore a great multitude of the Jews knew that he was there, and they came not on account of Jesus only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he raised from the dead. (10) And the high priests took counsel together that they might put Lazarus also to death. (11) For many of the Jews went away, and believed in Jesus on his account.

§ 38. We have already given you sufficient explanations relative to Mary and the perfume; the embalming of Jesus, the words spoken by Judas and Jesus (verses 1–9) and the raising of Lazarus. You may ask what became of Lazarus, whom the chief priests proposed to put to death. Like most of the followers of Jesus, he hid himself as long as he thought he had reason to fear the immediate anger of the Master's enemies.

It is said that at the time of the Crucifixion, the numerous sick persons whom Jesus had healed, and the multitudes who crowded round his path, had all disappeared.

This need not surprise you. Most of them were humble persons; and what could they have done to help Jesus? They would only have increased the bitterness of the hatred which was felt towards him, by any demonstration; they followed the stages of the divine drama, but without casting themselves in its path, and leading to needless complications. They had no part to fulfil; but as soon as the mission of Jesus was completed, and his doctrine was formed into a school, they gathered round the disciples, and became the first Christians. Where was the necessity to transmit their history to posterity? It is lost, like that of all those first Apostles of the faith who lived for God only, and through him.

Digitized by Google

VERSES 12–19.

Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

12) On the next day a great multitude who came to the feast, hearing that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, (13) Took branches of palm trees, and came out to meet him, and cried, Hosanna; blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel. (14) And Jesus, finding a young ass, sat upon it, as it is written. (15) Fear not, daughter of Zion. behold thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. (16) And his disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about him, and that they had done these things to him. (17) Then the multitude who were with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb, and raised him from the dead, bore witness. (18) On this account also, the multitude met him, because they had heard that he had wrought this sign. (19) Then the Pharisees said to each other, Do you not see that you prevail nothing? behold the world follows after him.

§ 39. The narrative of John is a summary of facts which the three first Evangelists had related in detail, respecting the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

We have only to add to former explanations that the words "when Jesus was glorified" (v. 16) would be better interpreted "when he returned to his glory." They signify, "when Jesus had returned to his own spiritual nature."

VERSES 20–26.

The Gentiles desire to see Jesus.—His Remarks.

§ 40. Divide these verses that they may be explained more clearly.

(20) And there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. (21) Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, saying, Lord, we wish to see Jesus. (22) Philip goes and tells Andrew, and again Philip and Andrew tell Jesus.

These were recent converts to Judaism. They were called Greeks, because they were looked upon as infidels and idolators; for even after the lapse of centuries, foreign converts were regarded as inferior to the pure children of Israel, who did not perceive that there was more merit in choosing what is good than in unconsciously conforming to it.

We must state one objection beforehand. Every spirit, before incarnation, selects the medium in which he is to live, and the opinions and form of worship under which he

Digitized by Google

will range himself, always with a view to advance them by his own progress. This is the case; but he who has incarnated himself as a trial, in a medium inferior to that in which he ought to live, and in an order of belief and worship different to those to which he ought to belong, in order to advance them by his own progress, has then the merit of taking the initiative of rising from it while his vision is obscured by the flesh; whereas he who is placed in a progressive centre, and remains voluntarily in *statu quo*, does not fulfil his duties, and is false to his obligations.

Progress is always in proportion to the degree of intelligence. God does not expect the South Sea Islander to become a Howard; but he requires that he shall not exaggerate the brutal instincts which animate him; and that he should not be ferocious simply because he takes pleasure in ferocity. Everything is proportional, and the obligations of humanity are always in proportion to its faculties. The savage who spares an enemy does as great an action as the civilized man who sacrifices his life and fortune to save a brother. Relatively to his condition the sacrifice is as great, or perhaps even greater; and his progress is proportionate to his sacrifice.*

(23) And Jesus answered them, saying, The time is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. (24) Verily, verily, I say unto you, Unless the grain of wheat which falls into the ground, dies, it remains alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit.

Jesus alludes to the necessity of his approaching "death," and to the fruits which it should yield by his earthly mission, when it should be diffused, both in the present and the future, but more especially at the then future period of the new era, when all men, both Jews and Gentiles, shall range themselves under the same banner of love and charity, by practising the pure morality preached by the Son of Man, and personified in his teachings and examples.

Nothing in the universe exists without a first cause. The seed produces the fruit, but it must first suffer the necessary

* "A missionary is often as incapable of perceiving the use of an idol to a savage, as is a grown man of appreciating the value of a doll to a child."—(*Tylor.*)—TRANS.

Digitized by Google

transformations. Thus, the sacrifice of Jesus could not yield its fruits until it was completed. What would have been the power of his word, and his exhortations to self-denial, love, and devotion, if he had not preached the virtues which he came to impose upon men by his own example? If he had not suffered, all would have said, "What effort did it cost him to do good, and to be pure and virtuous? Was he not a privileged spirit by nature? Was not his essence superior to any other?" If his origin had been revealed, would it not have furnished a pretext to deny his sacrifice and its merits?

Some may still say, "He had not to suffer like men; and his nature was not like theirs. Are not his passage through the world, his privations, sorrows, and death, only an insulting phantasmagoria to the men whom he urged to follow in his steps, when he knew that human matter is condemned to external sensibility which he could not have felt; and bound to a life which it is painful to quit, so much the more, as besides the suffering, there is the uncertainty respecting man's fate to come; whereas Jesus suffered neither pain nor uncertainty."

Did not Jesus suffer? How do you know? O men, who only understand and believe in what concerns you materially, and regard moral sufferings as so little, you do not comprehend how far they surpass physical sufferings. O men, who disregard the importance of the sacrifice of Jesus, because he was not clothed with corruptible flesh like yours, look into the depths of your own hearts, and ask yourselves sincerely whether you would prefer to suffer bodily torture or to endure to behold the ingratitude, baseness, and crime of those whom you love better than yourselves? You who are not buried in selfishness; fathers, mothers, children, humanitarians, who look upon all men as beloved brethren; what sufferings do you experience when you behold the objects of your tenderest love repel you with contempt, and cast the stone at you!

Is it said that Jesus could not suffer like other men, because he was not of their nature? It is true that he did

Digitized by Google

not suffer in the same manner as the material men of your inferior planet; but if his sufferings were of a different nature, would they not be greater than those of your humanity? His fluidic body was incapable of feeling material pain, because the sensations which Jesus experienced had no similarity with the painful feelings of a limb which is lopped off, or a part that is struck and bruised; but Jesus was pre-eminently sensitive to impressions falling, with a violence which you cannot understand, upon the moral nature. It is on this account that we tell you that Jesus, the willing victim to his love for his protegés, the men of your planet, though not suffering physically, yet suffered most acutely. Consider the moral sufferings felt by some highly refined natures among yourselves; the blow which they experience on receiving bad news, and the tortures which they feel at the sight of ingratitude and malice, when they, or the objects of their tender affection, are the victims of calumny or persecution. Would not these sensitive spirits prefer physical pain to the constant moral suffering which they are obliged to endure? And does not this moral suffering, if pushed to a certain point, equal or even surpass material bodily suffering? Does it not sometimes affect the physical frame to such an extent as to destroy it? Do you not see uneasiness, vexation, and finally consumption, wear away the organism; and do you refuse to acknowledge how intolerable moral sufferings may become?

What might not be the sufferings of Jesus from this point of view! How great must be his sorrow when he beholds you so ungrateful, so slothful, and so guilty! He suffered, and suffers still; and the sacrifice which he performed always lasts, and will last, so long as he has not gathered all his sheep under the folds of his protecting mantle.

Do not say, "What is the use of an imaginary sacrifice?" The sacrifice was real, and so much the more real that the spirit alone was capable of feeling the suffering. The moral sufferings of Jesus are caused by your sloth and negligence. His anxiety on your behalf did not begin when he appeared among the Jews, but the day when your

Digitized by Google

globe arose from the primeval nebula, and became fitted to receive the spiritual essences designed to follow the phases of their development, corresponding to the development of matter. He then worked unremittingly at the progress of the newly-formed spiritual essences, and led them and your planet on to the period destined for the appearance of man on your primitive earth, which was then fitted to receive the human incarnation of those fallen spirits whose degree of guilt rendered it needful for them to endure this severe, but necessary trial. He has incessantly urged on and renovated progress in all the kingdoms of nature, at all points of your globe; and has likewise urged on and renewed his appeals to repentance and progress by incessantly incarnating spirits at every point of the globe, who were always superior to the masses, and commissioned to give them a new impetus. These appeals are repeated again and again, and his anxiety is constantly on the alert, and will never rest until you shall have attained to the superior regions to which you ought to aspire.

Is it said that human matter clings to a life which it is painful to it to quit, especially as it is uncertain of its future destiny, and that Jesus was incapable of feeling either the suffering or the uncertainty? Would you sink Jesus to the level of your own moral inferiority, which has not even yet permitted you to comprehend that the body is only a temporary covering for the spirit; the instrument of its trials, expiations, and progress, and that death is the deliverance of the spirit, for it restores it to liberty, as the prisoner is restored to liberty when the gates of his dungeon are thrown open; and that death is also the conmencement, source, and means of fresh progress. Jesus being always a pure spirit beneath his tangible fluidic envelope, possessed full knowledge of his origin, and the certainty of his future. He foresaw the results which he would attain, and his charitable efforts were addressed still more to future generations than to the generation living at that period. He experienced none of the horrors and sufferings which men, and especially material men, suffer at the approach of death,

Digitized by Google

when they cling to a life which they are unwilling to leave. Jesus has told you that no one took away his life, but that he laid it down of himself, having authority to lay it down and to take it up again, for the fulfilment of the earthly mission which God had given him; for he descended among men to teach them to live and die in view of the progress of the spirit; and to this object all his efforts were directed.

Is it said that the passage of Jesus on earth would have been a mocking phantasmagoria of humanity? Let men who might be tempted to use such language reflect, and raise their thoughts above the narrow level which restricts their intelligence within the bounds of matter, and darkens it, and leads it astray. They will then understand the vast designs of Providence respecting your planet and its humanity; and the infinite wisdom of the Lord who watches over the progress of men, and gives every age and period what it is able to receive, leading the generations of men in their ascending course, according to the needs and faculties of every age, under the obedient or rebellious action of the free-will of men, and its deflections, deficiencies, or even opposition.

They will then understand that the successive revelations are each proportioned, like the missions and events which control them, to the necessities and state of intelligence of the period. Each is effected by the incarnation of spirits who are always superior in comparison to the masses, and are commissioned to urge them onwards; and each revelation yields its fruits, in such a manner that each prepares for that which is to follow; and is, in turn, explained and developed by the next.

They will understand that each of the earlier revelations was handed over to human interpretations, under the empire of the letter, and was to prepare for the advent of the Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which Jesus predicted and promised. This is the present revelation, which comes to explain those which have preceded it, in spirit and in truth; and the new era now opening before you will have its first Messianic years marked by the incarnation of missionary

Digitized by Google

spirits, always superior to the masses, sent to prepare the way for the second coming of Jesus, as the Spirit of Truth. Consult the history of your humanity; consider each revelation, and the surroundings amid which it took place; follow the course of the revelation delivered by Moses, and by the prophets of Israel; mark its development and phases; and the advent of the Messiah, which they prepared and foretold. Consider the manner of his appearance, under the twofold aspect veiled by the letter, of a human and extra-human nature and origin. Follow the course of events and human interpretations until the appearance of Jesus on your earth. Consider the revelation of the angel to Mary and Joseph, which was linked with that which had preceded it, and which preceded and announced the appearance of Jesus; which revelation remained secret until it could be conveniently revealed, that it might yield its fruits. Follow its development and phases until your own times, amid the efforts and discussions of human thought and interpretations. Consider the surroundings amid which Jesus appeared to accomplish his earthly mission; consider his words and actions, and the course of events and of human interpretations during his earthly mission, and afterwards. Consider the advent of the Spirit of Truth, which he predicted, and for which he prepared, and you will then understand that what took place was the necessary condition and means of the progress of your humanity, and that the hour of the present revelation has arrived.

Jesus could not have accomplished his mission in the spiritual state, amid the disincarnated spirits of your planet, that he might then send them forth purified on the high road of progress. Do not forget that the spirit must pursue its course, linked to an earthly body, as one of the conditions of its progress. Consequently, in order to be useful, the means of progress are given to incarnate spirits only. The spirit progresses in the free state, but *only in proportion to the impetus which it has received during incarnation.* This is the inevitable law, from the moment when it has been condemned to incarnation till the moment when its sentence

Digitized by Google

(which is its own work, as being the consequence of its own actions) is lifted from it. This is the reason that Jesus met with so much opposition, for the spirit possesses its free-will, and its degree of moral development, and is freely open to the reception of good or evil influences. Thus, it was necessary that the mission of Jesus should be accomplished on the earth; thus, the opposition which he met with, though foreseen and expected, was none the less opposition; and thus it is, too, that his mission is still incomplete, and can only be completed in the course of ages.

The material men of that age needed first the human aspect of the revelation, and material sufferings, the only ones which they could understand or estimate. Then they needed the "miraculous" aspect of a revelation which was veiled by the letter, and which afterwards led them to look upon the celestial messenger as God-made man, subject like themselves to death, and as having experienced material sufferings and death.

Regarded in this light, the "death," and the earthly mission of Jesus, were to serve the present and to prepare for future spiritual progress, and thus to train the intelligence of men to understand moral sufferings, and to receive the New Revelation, and the grandeur and object of his mission.

(25) He who loveth his life shall lose it, and he who hateth his life in this world shall keep it in age-long life.

To love one's life is to sacrifice everything to present well-being, sensual pleasures, pride, and selfishness. This is to lose one's spiritual life, by remaining within the bounds of material incarnation.

To hate is a strong expression in your language. In the Hebrew sense, it only means that you should not make an idol of life, and sacrifice to it what honour, reverence, and love of God should lead men to respect. This is to preserve one's spiritual life by walking in the paths which lead to perfection.

(26) If anyone would serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my servant be; and if anyone shall serve me, the Father will honour him.

This needs no explanation. To serve Jesus is to obey

Digitized by Google

the law of love; and whosoever follows it is worthy to be a Son of God.

VERSES 27–36.

Continuation of the Words of Jesus.

Divide these verses, and we will give you special explanations.

(27) Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, deliver me from this hour? But on account of this I came to this hour. (28) Father, glorify thy name. Then a voice came from heaven: I have also glorified it, and will glorify it again. (29) Then the crowd who stood there and heard it, said that it was thunder; others said, An angel spoke to him. (30) Jesus answered and said, This voice came not on my account, but on yours.

(V. 27.)—Jesus set men an example of submission to the decrees of Providence. These words have the same object, as regards men, as those which have already been explained (Vol. ii. § 287, pp. 378–384): "Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Christ prepared those who heard him for the events which were to follow, that his words might return to their memory, and bring forth fruits of faith. He addressed himself to his Father in Heaven that he might always raise the spirit of man towards his Creator, and teach him from what source he can draw strength and faith, and on whom he must rely to reward his efforts.

The voice was an effect produced by the spirits around Jesus, and was designed to prove positively that Jesus was really a celestial messenger, and that whenever a man raises his spirit to God, with confidence, his power sustains and strengthens him.

The words, "I have also glorified it, and will glorify it again," mean that God has obliged men to glorify his name and power by the manifestations which he has already permitted to arrest their attention; and that he will do so again whenever they depart from him.

Jesus said, "This voice came not on my account, but on yours." Jesus needed no manifestations which men could

Digitized by Google

perceive to convince him that his voice had reached his Heavenly Father; but it was needful to produce a material impression upon material men.

(31) Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.

These are figurative expressions. The Messianic manifestation being the grandest which has yet taken place, or would take place until the advent of the Spirit of Truth, was that which ought to produce the strongest positive effect. It is this which has diffused the law of love which must envelop the earth like a protecting mantle. Consequently, it is by this mission of love that the world must be judged, that whatsoever in it is evil, as being contrary to this faith, may be cast out, and will be completely so at the time of the purification of your planet and its humanity, by the removal of the spirits who shall then still remain guilty and rebellious, who will be cast down to the inferior planets. The manifestation of the Spirit of Truth by the spirits of the Lord, both errant or incarnate, on missions, is the continuation and development, and, at the same time, the confirmation of the work which Jesus accomplished by his earthly mission; and it is preparatory to his second coming.

(32) And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. (33) And he said this, signifying by what kind of death he was to die.

Jesus alluded to his approaching "death;" but he alluded more especially to his Resurrection and the following events, up to and including his return to the ethereal regions at the time of his Ascension. "I will draw all men unto me," signifies that after Jesus had risen again and ascended to heaven, his precepts were to become more widely extended; and he was not speaking only of the events which were about to take place (his apparent death, resurrection, and ascension) but also of the incessant progress which men would make, tending constantly towards fraternity and unity.

(34) The multitude answered him, We have heard in the Law that the Christ abideth during the age; and how sayest thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? (35) Then Jesus said to them, Yet a little time is the light with you. Walk while you

Digitized by Google

have the light, lest the darkness should overtake you; and he who walks in darkness knows not where he goes. (36) If you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the sons of light. Jesus said these things, and departed, and hid himself from them.

Men who understood very little concerning the immortality of the soul, attributed to their Messiah an immortal material existence on earth. Jesus might have answered them by explaining the immortality, development, and progress of the soul; but would he have been understood? Would these still unenlightened intelligences have been better fitted to understand these revelations of the spiritual nature than a little child to understand algebraical definitions?

Jesus contented himself with saying, "I am the light," because he brought them light and not consuming fire. He developed their sight, but not to plunge them into darkness by dazzling them. Look at the sun, and when you turn your eyes away, all is darkness around you. Thus it is with your intelligence. It is needful to show you celestial light through a darkened glass which tempers its rays; else your feeble sight would be unable to endure it. Grow and develop yourselves, and you will be able to soar to spiritual heights, and view with clear eyes the splendours which await you.

The Jews said to Jesus, "We have heard in the Law that the Christ abides during the age." In common parlance, everything taught by the Rabbis was considered to form part of the law; and the popular notion which the Jews expressed was the result of the commentaries of learned men on the ancient books included in the Old Testament.

VERSES 37–43.

Unbelief of the Jews.

(37) But though he had wrought so many miracles before them, they did not believe in him. (38) That the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, who said, Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? (39) On this account they could not believe, as Isaiah said again, (40) He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and repent, and I should heal them. (41) Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory, and

Digitized by Google

spoke of him. (42) Nevertheless, even among the rulers many believed in him, but would not confess it on account of the Pharisees, lest they should be cast out of the synagogue, (43) For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.

§ 42. Does not that which took place with regard to Jesus repeat itself in your own days with regard to the New Revelation? Do you not witness the incredulity of the men of your own age, who no more believe in this revelation and its instruments than did the Jews believe in Jesus and in his mission? Do you not see many among those who believe in the new revelation, who dare not openly avow their spiritual faith, on account of the Pharisees of your own days, and for fear of being cast out of their "synagogues?" Do they not thus love the glory of men more than the glory of God?

The words of Isaiah are still fulfilled in your own days, for there are still impure, backward, ignorant, and, above all, proud spirits, who are in bondage, like the Jews, either to their material interests, and their human prejudices and traditions, or to their vices and passions; and reject the revelation of the Spirit of Truth and its instruments, or embitter themselves against them, just as the Jews rejected Jesus and his mission, and embittered themselves against it.

But time, expiation, and reincarnation, will lead to progress, and the light will then shine forth in the sight of those who cannot yet see it, that, according to the words of the prophet Isaiah, "they may see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts." We are speaking of those afflicted with moral blindness, whose intelligence is still too much darkened by matter and material influences.

VERSES 44–50.

The Light of the World.

(44) And Jesus cried out, and said, He who believeth in me does not believe in me, but in him that sent me. (45) And he who seeth me, seeth him that sent me. (46) I am come a light into the world, that whoever believeth in me, shall not remain in darkness. (47) And whoever shall hear my words, and shall not believe, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. (48) He who rejecteth me, and receiveth not my word, hath one that judgeth

Digitized by Google

him; the word that I have spoken this shall judge him on the last day. (49) For I have not spoken from myself, but my Father who sent me hath given me commandment what I shall say, and what I shall speak. (50) And I know that his commandment is age-long life; therefore, whatever I say, as the Father said to me, so I speak.

§ 43. The explanations that you have already received will enable you to understand these words. He who follows the morality which Jesus preached, does not practise a morality which proceeds from him, but one which proceeds, through his instrumentality, from God himself.

When Jesus said, "He who sees me, sees him that sent me," he did not speak of his body, which was material to the eyes of men, but of the spiritual being, conformed by his inspirations to him that sent him. Never materialize the words of Jesus, but always seek for the spirit.

Jesus came to save the world; for he is, as he said, "a light," by the morality which he preached; and all those who practise it progress and purify themselves by advancing on the road which should free them from the darkness of material incarnation, and from the darkening of the intelligence, and expiation after death. Jesus came not to judge the world, but to save the world, for he came to teach men to live and die with the progress of the spirit in view. He came to regenerate your humanity by teaching and exemplifying all virtues, and by pointing out to all men the path which ought to lead them to fraternity and unity.

We have already explained the words, "My Father judges no one; I judge no one." Man judges himself for each of his actions, and on the last day of his body, the judgment pronounced by his conscience, but which he is often unwilling to hear, will be rendered clear and precise to him. It is the pure morality which Jesus preached, and which he has declared to be all the law and the prophets, which is the criterion of judgment for the conscience of man.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSES 1–13.

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet.

§ 44. Divide these verses, and we will give you the

Digitized by Google

special explanations required on the verses which have not been dealt with already in the commentary on the three first Gospels.

(1) And before the feast of the Passover, Jesus, seeing that his hour was come that he should depart from this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. (2) And when supper was ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, (3) Jesus, knowing that his Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and departed to God, (4) Rose up from supper, and laid aside his garments, and taking a towel girded himself. (5) Then he poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

Do not fall into the error of some who call themselves "Christians," in supposing that Judas was "possessed by the devil" when he resolved to betray Jesus. You know that you should understand by such expressions an evil influence or inspiration. A bad man may be guided by his own spirit, which is to him a devil; but this does not lead reflecting men to think that God predestines some of his creatures to be the prey of contrary influences stronger than themselves, that they may serve as passive instruments for the accomplishment of his designs. Not so; God has created the spirit free, and responsible for his actions, which are his exclusive work, or into which he is led by the evil influences which he attracts by his own instincts, and which he is at liberty to accept or to reject by virtue of his free-will.

Jesus, knowing his superior origin, desired to give the men whom he called his brethren an example of humility and self-renunciation by the emblematic action of washing their feet. He therefore likened himself to a slave, and fulfilled the service of one.

Ah, how far are those who would practise this ablution, from him who set the example! Are they the servants of the poor and humble? And after fulfilling this vain formality, do they remember to imitate the humble life of him who said, "My kingdom is not of this world," and "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head?" Is it not a parody, when they fill one of the kingdoms of the earth, and live in a sumptuous palace?

Digitized by Google

In order to manifest the importance and object of this example of humility and self-abnegation, John quotes the words spoken by John the Baptist, and by Jesus himself, on his nature, origin and mission (v. 3).

Jesus was fully conscious of his nature, origin and powers. He knew that he was about to resume his own spiritual nature, and thus to return to God; and he, the Divine Model, desired by the emblematic action of washing his Apostles' feet, to show men the path which he opened and traversed among them, and in which they must walk to raise and purify themselves, and thus return to God by perfection. This is the path of humility, simplicity, and self-abnegation. It is followed by abstaining from all the passions which mislead and disgrace your humanity—and which are well called "deadly sins"—and by practising the law of love towards all.

(6) Then he comes to Simon Peter, and this one says to him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? (7) Jesus answered and said to him, What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know after these things.

Peter's opposition to the act of Jesus was the natural consequence of his reverence for his Master; but Jesus insisted, and made him understand what was needful for him who would feed the flock of the Lord.

The answer of Jesus, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," relates to the position which Peter was to hold, and the rank which all those who desire to be his successors ought to hold. It alludes to the light that the apparent death and resurrection of Jesus would shed upon his words.

Those who call themselves the successors of Peter would really be so if they followed in his steps, and thus fulfilled their obligations. Every man who acts like Peter may call himself, and assuredly is, his successor. Let all who find themselves in circumstances which enable them to teach, preach, and serve men, act, in word and example, with humility, self-renunciation and love, and they will then be the successors of Peter. Let those who assume this title officially, descend from their thrones. Let them be humble

Digitized by Google

and gentle, pure and devoted, and go to bring consolation, courage, and faith to others. Let them wash the feet of their disciples, not pompously before the crowds who cross themselves devoutly, but every hour of the day by their secret actions and humble virtues. Let them set the example of what they preach, and of what Jesus preached; and let them not pervert his words of infinite love by turning them into words of hatred and vengeance. Let them preach peace instead of discord. Let them give alms instead of receiving for themselves, through the priests, the pence intended for the poor; and they may then call themselves the successors of Peter; the shepherds of the flock of Jesus, whose flock is your entire humanity.

(8) Peter says to him, Thou shalt never wash my feet in the age. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. (9) Simon Peter says to him, Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head.

Peter's reverence for his Master was as great as his love, and it suffered from seeing him perform this menial service; but Jesus insisted, to teach him the necessity of humility in man, since he himself practised it. Peter did not yet understand the hidden object of the action, and believed at first that a purification by ablution was necessary to enable him to equal the Master, and he therefore asked to be washed all over.

But the words of Jesus embraced your whole humanity, both in the present and future. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," means, spiritually explained, that if man does not submit to the purifying law of Christ he will not attain the object which he seeks.

Do not forget that it is not necessary to call oneself a Christian to be a disciple of Jesus, and to follow the law of love. Remember, too, that ablution, as a means of purification, was carried to such an extent among the Jews that they never took a meal without first washing their hands, that they might not soil their food, in case they had inadvertently touched anything impure.

(10) Jesus says to him, He who is washed has no need but to wash his feet, but is wholly clean, and ye are clean, but not all. (11) For

Digitized by Google

he knew who would betray him; and on this account he said, Ye are not all clean.

These words are figurative. You should understand, from what we have just said respecting verses 3–5, that the washing of the feet was another emblem of the way in which the disciples were to follow the new path on which they were about to enter, after having had their feet purified by the Master from all the stains that the old road had left upon them.

As regards Judas, he was not disposed for any purification at that moment; and it is plain that in the eyes of Jesus the outward action was worthless in itself, in so far that it was material, and that it had only an emblematic meaning, since, while purifying the other Apostles, it did not purify Judas. Jesus knew that Judas would betray him; for he knew that he had undertaken a task above his strength, and would fail; and he read it in his thoughts.

(12) When therefore he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, he sat down, and said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? (13) You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for I am. (14) If therefore I have washed your feet, being your Lord and Teacher, you ought also to wash each other's feet. (15) For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, you should do likewise.

At the same time that Jesus asserted, under the veil of the letter, his position and powers in reference to your planet and its humanity, he gave men a lesson and example of humility and self-abnegation, which, if practised by all who would walk in his steps, would be the means of progress and purity for all earnest men.

(16) Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his master, nor the ambassador greater than him who sent him. (17) If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

"The servant is not greater than his master." All spirits are equal before the Lord; and the hierarchy is established on virtue alone; for social conditions have no existence in his eyes.

"The ambassador is not greater than he who sent him." This alludes to the notions which would grow up respecting the divinity of Jesus. Men have been bent upon exalting him, and would have been inclined to place him above God,

Digitized by Google

and make him the sovereign of the heavens; and the figure of Jesus would then have effaced that of God! Nay, has it not effaced it in general, and removed it from the thoughts of men? Are not the principal prayers and honours which are addressed to the Trinity addressed specially and nominally to Jesus? And do you not, in your own days, behold the reverence, worship, and adoration directed to Mary, casting into the shade both Christ and Him who is from all eternity the One, Sole, Indivisible God?

Jesus, who is never called God, and who, on the contrary, always expressly proclaimed that the Father was the only true God, has here condemned in advance that human exaggeration which would have placed him above God.

"If you know these things, blessed are ye if you do them." If you understand the equality which exists between right-thinking men, and the position which you ought to assign to the Master, you will be blessed; for you will practise fraternity and universal love in sincerity. These words, which Jesus addressed to his disciples, are applicable to all ages.

VERSES 18–30.

Jesus foretells the Treason of Judas.

(18) I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen, but that the writing may be fulfilled: He who eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. (19) I tell you now before it happens, that when it has happened, you may believe that I am he. (20) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who receiveth anyone whom I shall send, receiveth me, and he who receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. (21) While Jesus was saying these things, he was troubled in spirit, and bore witness, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me. (22) Then the disciples looked at one another, doubting of whom he spoke. (23) And there was one of the disciples whom Jesus loved, resting on the bosom of Jesus. (24) Then Simon Peter nodded to him to ask who it was of whom he spoke. (25) He then, who was reclining on Jesus' breast, saith to him, Lord, who is it? (26) Jesus answered, It is he to whom I shall give the sop after I have dipped it. And having dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. (27) And after the sop, then Satan entered into him. Then Jesus said to him, What thou doest, do quickly. (28) But no one of those reclining knew why he said this to him. (29) For some thought that because Judas had the bag, Jesus said to him, Buy what we require for the feast, or that he should give something to the poor. (30) Then he, taking the sop, went out immediately, and it was night.

Digitized by Google

§ 45. We have already explained the character of the treachery of Judas in the Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels, and the narrative of John explains and completes the others.

The words, "I know whom I have chosen," relate to the eleven faithful Apostles, who were capable of undertaking and carrying out to the end the mission which they had requested. They had been chosen, in the sense that their guides had encouraged them to demand it, and they had obtained it, and had thus been accepted by Jesus. Jesus foretold the treason of Judas, in order to strike the attention of the Apostles, that when the event itself should come to pass, they might be convinced by this extra-human faculty of the prescience of the future, that Jesus was really the messenger of God.

Immediately afterwards, he prepared them to understand, when their active mission commenced, after his final departure from the earth, that, as being his messengers, they were also the messengers of the Lord, and that whoever received their teachings received the teachings of the Master, just as he who receives the teachings of the Master receives the teachings of the Lord. But verse 20 likewise applies to all ages, and to all the spirits whom Jesus should send on a mission among men, to give an impetus to progress, or to develop it. They apply especially to the Apostles of the New Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which he predicted and promised, who come to explain the Master's words and actions, and the principles and consequences of his mission, in order to prepare and complete the work of human regeneration.

The figurative words respecting Judas, "Satan entered into him," mean that the idea of treason already springing up in his mind, became a fixed resolve ready to assert itself in action. The disciples did not understand why Jesus said to Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly." They consequently busied themselves with conjectures. They could not think that Jesus regarded Judas as a traitor; and although they thought that such an act might be possible

Digitized by Google

on the part of Judas, they did not suspect him at that moment.

It was needful for the events to be fulfilled, and Judas obeyed the influences which ruled his thoughts. The words of Jesus meant, "Carry out your design."

VERSES 31–38.

Love one another.

§ 46. (31) Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. (32) If God is glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and he will immediately glorify him.

These words relate to the approaching "death" of Jesus, and to the results which it was to produce both in the present and the future, for the progress and regeneration of your humanity. The elevation of the creature to eternal glory is the only means of giving glory to God, and to his celestial messenger.

(33) Little children, yet a little time I am with you. You shall seek me, and as I said to the Jews, Where I go, you cannot come; so I tell you now.

Jesus alluded here to his disappearance from the tomb, his return to his own spiritual nature at the period of the Ascension, and to the mission which his disciples were to accomplish on the earth, after the completion of his own.

(34) I give you a new commandment, that you also love one another. (35) In this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love towards one another.

These words were addressed specially to his disciples; but they likewise apply to all ages; for the Master's mission began at the time of the formation of your planet; it was manifested by his appearance among men, and it still continues, and will only terminate when he has led you to perfection; to the rank of pure spirits, and thus to the feet of the Father.

Whoever practises the pure morality preached by Jesus is his disciple, for he practises universal fraternity and love. Men, love one another; it is by the love that you bear to each other that all will recognize you as the disciples of

Digitized by Google

Jesus. Apostles of the New Revelation, set your brethren the example of the practice of the law of love by loving each other yourselves.

(36) Simon Peter says to him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Where I go, you cannot follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

The Apostles in the incarnate state were still little children, but nevertheless they were advanced spirits.

In saying to Peter, "You cannot follow me *now*," Jesus gives a proof of the inferiority of your planet, but he allowed the hope of progress to shine through his words. In adding "thou shalt follow me hereafter," he alluded to the elevation of the spirit of Peter, as well as of those of the other Apostles to whom he spoke, which would enable them, after their mission was completed, to rise into the superior regions to follow Jesus; or, in other words, to continue to advance in the path of progress under his guidance.

(37) Peter saith to him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thee. (38) Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, A cock shall not crow until thou hast denied me thrice.

Peter did not understand the answer of Jesus, and thought only of the danger which menaced his Master. Then Jesus foretold to Peter that he would deny him.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSES 1–12.

The Many Mansions.

§ 47. (1) Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God; believe also in me.

Jesus reassures Peter and the other Apostles, reminds them of their faith in God, and exhorts them to have faith in his mission, and therefore in what he is about to say.

(2) In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you.

These words of Jesus contain a positive assertion of the habitability of the worlds scattered through space, by the spirits who live on your planet, and of their ascending hierarchy.

Digitized by Google

The Father's house is the Universe; space; infinity.

The "many mansions" refer to all worlds indiscriminately. They are dwellings suited to their inhabitants, for the ascending hierarchy of worlds corresponds with that of the spirits who inhabit them.

We have already given you a sketch of the innumerable mansions in the Father's house, in speaking of the origin of the spirit, and of the spiritual genealogy of Jesus. The spirit changes his dwelling in proportion to his progress, by going to inhabit another appropriate to the degree of elevation which he has acquired, and to the faculties, necessities, and conditions of his advancement.

It is as impossible to give you an exact and complete account of all the worlds as to detail and describe the Infinite to you. What you are capable of knowing and understanding, and what it is possible and allowable for us to explain to you, is as follows:—In order that the spiritual essence may arrive at the period preparatory to the spiritual condition of independent, free and responsible intelligence, it must, at its origin, pass through the successive and progressive stages of materialization in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, and of incarnation in the animal kingdom. After spirits have passed through the preparatory period, they are placed in possession of free will, and thus pass into the state of formed spirit, but into a state of simplicity, ignorance, and innocence, whence they must be led through infancy by the instruction of their guides, to be placed in a condition to make use of their free will. Then, each spirit chooses his course in independence, liberty, and responsibility. If he remains pure in the path of progress, obeys his guides, and constantly follows the straight and simple path which is pointed out to him, he arrives at perfection, having progressed to the fluidic state, and become a pure spirit, unfallen, and of perfect and immaculate purity, like Jesus, the protector and ruler of your planet.

But if, on the contrary, he departs from the straight and simple course which is pointed out to him, he fails; and many fail, either at the outset, or after having acquired a

Digitized by Google

greater or less degree of development and progress. He is then subjected to human incarnation under conditions suited to his degree of guilt, and to his faculties and need of development. He also finally arrives at perfection, and after having been completely purified, he becomes a pure spirit, like his brethren. After having started originally from the same point, he has arrived at the same goal, although by different paths; for it is rendered to each according to his works.

In order that all may thus proceed from the infinitely little to the infinitely great, there are primitive worlds just emerged from the incandescent fluids, where the spiritual essences which have been deposited there are elaborated. Then, when the globe has entered upon the material period, the spiritual essences develop and progress by materialization in a progressive and ascending scale in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, and then, by incarnation, in the animal kingdom. At the time of the appearance of man on the planet, by the incarnation of spirits who have fallen to the point which renders primitive incarnation necessary for them, these worlds become worlds of trials and expiations to the fallen spirits, but pursue their progressive and ascending course in a manner proportionate and corresponding to that of the spirits who inhabit them.

There are special worlds where the spiritual essence, after having passed through the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, are prepared for the spiritual condition of formed spirit, gifted with independent, free and responsible intelligence.

The fluidic worlds are destined to be inhabited by spirits who have not fallen since their state of infancy and instruction, and who remain pure in the path of progress, until they attain to the fluidic state. Thus, there are different worlds, also following their progressive and hierarchically-ascending course, at every stage, and appropriate to the state of development and progress of the spirits who inhabit them, from the state of infancy and instruction, to the state of pure spirits, when these worlds have likewise progressively

Digitized by Google

arrived at a purely fluidic condition corresponding to the state of their inhabitants.

The various worlds intended for the fallen spirits who are subjected to human incarnation, are also appropriated to the state of development and progress of the spirits who inhabit them. The material worlds are more or less inferior or superior to each other; and there are worlds more or less material, and more or less fluidic, which all serve, in the progressive and ascending scale, for the incarnation of fallen spirits, and thus for their development and progress; and all worlds are destined in the course of ages and eternities to take their place among the celestial or divine worlds, which can only be inhabited by pure spirits.

The worlds of trials and expiations are thus of intermediate degrees, superior or inferior to each other, from the appearance of man by primitive human incarnation to the period of regeneration; and beyond this period, until the regeneration is completed by the purification of the planet and its humanity, by the separation of the darnel from the good corn.

The regenerative worlds are designed to prepare the fallen spirits who have still somewhat to expiate, to rise progressively from the material period. These are transitional worlds, where justice reigns, and where the spirits pursue and complete the purification which renders them capable only of good and incapable of evil. These worlds have also intermediate degrees among themselves, inferior or superior to one another.

The happy worlds are those where the regenerated spirit, cleansed from every evil desire, has only to progress in goodness, without having to struggle against evil. In this stage, the spirits, like the worlds, have entered on the semi-fluidic period, which is the commencement of the dematerialization of the body.

In the various regenerative worlds, which are preparatory and intermediate between these and the happy worlds, the body disengages itself from a part of its corruptible matter. It frees itself, little by little, but is not yet wholly freed from the decomposition of matter.

Digitized by Google

The more the body develops itself by reason of the advancement of the spirit, the more the substances which comprise it volatilize at death, and free themselves from animal decomposition; but this belongs to physiological questions beyond your scope.

The happy worlds have also intermediate degrees among themselves, and are inferior or superior to each other in the progressive and ascending scale, which is to lead them through a more and more fluidic condition, corresponding with that of the spirits who inhabit them, to the state of celestial or divine worlds.

The celestial or divine worlds are those which have arrived at the purely fluidic state, and which can only be inhabited by pure spirits.

(3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also.

The faithful disciples of Jesus had not yet finished their mission on earth. They had no further expiatory trials to suffer, but only missions to fulfil. We say expiatory trials, for when the spirit has not yet taken his place among the pure spirits by perfection, he is tried by the missions which are entrusted to him.

When the spirit is freed from the letter, the Master's words signify, "After I have finally quitted your earth, and you shall also have finished your mission, you must accomplish your spiritual mission under my direction. When you shall have fulfilled the new mission which is destined for you among men, and after I shall have thus prepared a place for you, I will return, as I have promised you. You will then be prepared by the perfection which you will have deserved, and by the perfect purity which you shall have acquired by your works, to take your place among the pure spirits, and I will receive you to myself, that where I am, you may be with me also." At the time of the second coming of Christ, the spirits who will then be incarnated, or more properly, incorporated on your planet, will be ready to attain to perfection, and the disciples, who have entered on the path of progress before you, and will always continue to advance, will then be prepared to become pure spirits.

Digitized by Google

In speaking of his second coming, Jesus alluded to the period when faith shall be freed from every error, and shall have cleansed men from every fault. You are on the threshold of this period, which is the era of the coming of the Spirit, but you are still far from having advanced one step in it.

(4) And where I go, ye know, and the way ye know. (5) Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not where thou goest, and how can we know the way? (6) Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one cometh to the Father but by me.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, for he is the emblem of the law of love.

He is the Way, by the morality which he preached and personified by his teachings and examples; for he has taught men to live and die with a view to the progress of the spirit. Whoever practises his morality, progresses and purifies himself.

He is the Truth, for he is the direct messenger of God appointed by him to transmit it to men, in proportion as they are able to bear it.

Truth is relative to the period and to the necessities of the age. Truth is one, but it is veiled, and only unfolded to the sight, to the extent and proportion that man is able to receive and understand it. The higher the spirit, the more the veils of the truth are torn from his eyes. The Truth is the knowledge of every principle in the physical, moral, and intellectual order, leading man to perfection, to fraternity, universal love, and disengagement from matter, by his sincere aspirations towards Spiritism, or, if you prefer it, to Spirituality. It is the same idea; but to your human comprehension, Spiritualism has led to Spiritism, and Spiritism should lead to Spirituality.

The Truth which is thus personified in Jesus, constitutes the task which he commenced before the appearance of man on your planet, and which he has constantly continued for your development and progress, firstly by missionary spirits, and then by Moses and the prophets among the Hebrews, and by missionary spirits among other nations, who prepared for his appearance on the earth. He himself

Digitized by Google

came to accomplish this task by his earthly mission, in the centre which had been prepared for him. He has continued the task by missionary spirits, until your own days, which witness the opening of the new era of the Christianity of Christ, and he will still continue it during this new era by his Messiahs or Messengers (missionary spirits, the organs of the Spirit of Truth) until the day of his second coming, this time clothed with all his spiritual glory, to your purified planet, to unfold the unveiled truth to its equally purified creatures.

He is the Life, for the spirit who progresses and purifies himself by practising his morality, is saved from spiritual death by the darkening of the intelligence, after the separation of the spirit from the body. He is also freed from expiation, and from that material incarnation which suspends all memory.

"No one cometh to the Father, but by me." Jesus, your protector and ruler, is alone entrusted with your development and progress, and with leading you to perfection; and no one can come to the Father except by perfection.

(7) If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; and from henceforth you know him, and have seen him.

These words are figurative. The disciples had not seen the Father materially, but spiritually, by beholding in Jesus the perfection which would lead them to him.

"If you had known the perfection which leads to the Father, and which I personify, you would also have known my Father spiritually, and you will soon know him thus; and you have already seen him spiritually by seeing in me the perfection which leads to him."

(8) Philip says to him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. (9) Jesus says to him, Am I so long with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father, and how sayest thou, Show us the Father.

Jesus repeats the same idea. It always relates to perfection, and was an illustration intelligible to the undeveloped minds of the Apostles in their incarnate state. The letter was sufficient for them and for future generations, until the revelation of the Spirit of Truth, for they were unable to

Digitized by Google

receive more than it was their mission to deliver to men, who were incapable of understanding according to the Spirit; and the letter was designed to prepare for the advent of the Spirit. It is the object of the present revelation, which you may call the revelation of the Revelation, to free the spirit from the letter.

(10) Dost thou not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The sayings which I speak to you, I speak not of myself, but the Father who dwelleth in me doeth the works. (11) Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; but if not, believe me through the works themselves.

As the purity of Jesus enabled him to be in constant communion with God, the divine inspiration is always in him, and his acts constantly correspond to it.

"Do you not believe that I am always in direct communion with my Father, and receive inspiration from him, and that my Father is in direct communion with me, and inspires me? What I say to you, I say not of myself, for I speak by the Divine inspiration; but my Father, who is always in direct communion with me, himself performs the works which I do, by the inspiration which he gives me. Let the works which I perform bear me witness, and believe it on their account."

(12) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who believeth in me shall do the same works which I do, and shall do greater than these, because I go to my Father.

He who has faith, acts in accordance with his faith, and his actions are always on an ascending scale. He who firmly believes in Jesus (that is, he who zealously pursues the path which he has traced out in love and truth) will become pure like him, and will perform actions similar to his, especially as, when Jesus has returned to his own sphere, he will have more liberty of action to inspire and guide his true and sincere imitators; and however far you may be from Jesus, do you not hope to arrive at the same goal? Jesus only worked among men by actions which they were able to comprehend, and which were in proportion to their intelligence. When we say "actions which they were able to comprehend," you must not understand

Digitized by Google

that they were able to grasp their causes, but only that they could perceive the results, and interpret them from their own points of view. The same thing applies to the actions which you will succeed in accomplishing when you have attained to a sufficient degree of perfection. As human intelligence will then have advanced, it will be necessary for your works to be of a higher order to impress it strongly. Ask for no explanations on this point, for you are at present incapable of understanding them. The question would be premature; and you should avoid trenching on the future.

VERSES 13–31.

Promise of the Comforter.

§ 48. (13) And whatsoever you shall ask in my name, I will do this, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (14) If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.

We have already explained the ideas in these verses in our remarks on Matt. vii. 7, xxi. 22; Mark xi. 24. Jesus here bears witness to the power of Faith. He does not tell men when their requests will be fulfilled, for his thought is not limited by time, and the conditions are always subordinate to the efforts of the incarnate spirit to receive and to second the impulse which is given to him, as well as to his faculties, and to the necessities for his advancement. That which glorifies the Father is the progress which men accomplish, and which Jesus watches over, as the protector and ruler of your planet. It is thus that the Father is glorified in the Son.

The words of Jesus are applicable to all ages, and to all men who walk in the path which he has traced out, and follow the morality which he preached, and who are, therefore, his disciples. Thus we say, with Jesus and for Jesus, to the Apostles of the new era, and to all men: Everything which you shall ask of the Father in the name of Jesus (everything which is pure and holy, and necessary for your personal progress, or for the progress of humanity) Jesus will accomplish, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. And if you ask anything of Jesus in his name, and in this manner, he will do it.

Digitized by Google

(15) If you love me, keep my commandments. (16) And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, which shall remain with you in the age. (17) The Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot receive, because it seeth it not, nor knoweth it; but you know it, because it remains with you, and shall be in you.

These words are figurative. The Spirit of Truth which Jesus gives to men is the Truth, which is always relative to the intelligence of those who receive it; and the knowledge of it is revealed to them by errant or incarnate missionary spirits, who receive the divine inspiration from the superior spirits who assist and guide them. From this point of view, God has always given the Spirit of Truth to men, for revelation is permanent and progressive, and Truth has always been revealed in proportion to what men were capable of understanding. It is so in your own days, which witness the beginning of the new era, and it will be so still, until the time when the Master shall return to show you the unveiled Truth.

In the case of the Apostles in their incarnate state, the Spirit of Truth which God was about to send them was the knowledge of the truth, relative to the requirements of the mission that they were about to accomplish, and according to the conditions necessary for its accomplishment; that is, the knowledge of the mission of Jesus, and of his authority. They were to receive this knowledge under the divine inspiration which was to remain in them, and be in them, through the assistance and inspiration of the Spirits of the Lord, who were entrusted with their guidance. This knowledge they were to transmit to the men of the period, and it was to be transmitted to future generations by the Gospel narratives.

The Spirit of Truth would remain with them for ever, for they were devoted and advanced spirits, and after the completion of their mission on earth, they were to advance further and further in the knowledge of the truth for ever, with the assistance and inspiration of spirits superior to themselves; for you are aware that even in the case of spirits who are equal in purity, there is always a hierarchy respecting superiority in universal knowledge; for the created spirit can never equal God.

Digitized by Google

The world could not receive and know the Spirit of Truth which God was about to give to the Apostles, for impure, material, and backward spirits were incapable and unworthy of receiving the knowledge of the truth under divine inspiration, and thus of receiving the assistance and inspiration of the superior spirits who were to aid and guide the disciples whom Jesus had appointed to spread the good news.

(18) I will not leave you orphans; I am coming to you. (19) Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also. (20) In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.

These words are still wholly figurative and spiritual. Jesus first announced to the disciples that the spiritual inspiration would not leave them in want of anything, and that he would come spiritually to them by sending them the superior spirits who were commissioned to help and guide them. He then alludes to the period of his return into space, which was near; after which he would not be materially visible to the eyes of the body, but would be spiritually visible to the eyes of the spirit in thought and by faith. Thus he alludes to the spiritual life, and to the spiritual relations which it established between men and spirits. It is thus that the world will see him no more (meaning the impure, material, and backward men who see only the bodily life, and see only materially with their bodily eyes), but the disciples would see him spiritually, for in thought and faith they would see the perfection which he personified on earth, because he will thus live spiritually for them, and they will also live the spiritual life which will thus give them the sight of the Master. They will then know that Jesus is in communion with the Father and inspired by him, and that they themselves are in communion with Jesus, and inspired and guided by him, by the mediation of the superior spirits. Even when they did not feel it, they had confidence in it, and their confidence was confirmed by the spirit-manifestation of the "tongues of fire;" the superior spirits who were to inspire and guide them.

(21) He who has my commandments and keeps them, he is it who loveth me. And he who loveth me is beloved of my Father, and I will

Digitized by Google

love him, and will manifest myself to him. (22) Judas (not Iscariot) saith to him, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the world? (23) Jesus answered and said to him, If any one shall love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make an abode with him. (24) He who loveth me not, doth not keep my words, and the saying which you hear is not mine, but my Father's who sent me.

What Jesus says here has a much wider meaning than men give to it, and is not confined to the minority who call themselves "Christians," but to all who practise the morality of Christ, and thus attract his protection, and therefore that of God. God and Jesus love all men, for God has universal and infinite love in himself, and Jesus, who participates with God in this love, is, as regards your planet, the personification and emblem of the law of love which he taught and practised to its fullest extent during his earthly mission. But all men do not love God and Jesus, for the only way in which they can love them and prove their love to them here below, is to follow the commandments of God, which are all included in the pure morality preached by his messenger, Christ, who has extended and applied his commands to all humanity.

Although God and Jesus love all men, in the sense that they include them all in their love, and desire their progress, and are always ready to aid it, they only love them in the sense of granting them their protection, so far as they attract them by endeavouring to follow this morality. God and Jesus come to those who observe this morality, and practise these commandments, "and take up their abode with them," in the sense that they send good spirits to transmit the inspiration of Jesus, who is himself inspired by the Lord; and this inspiration remains with them when they persevere, suggesting the desire of whatsoever is true, just, and good, and thus conducive to their progress, and to their moral and intellectual advancement. It is by the inspiration that he thus sends them, that Jesus remains with earnest men.

Man possesses his free will and the liberty as well as the responsibility of his thoughts and actions. He who does not keep the commandments that Christ has given him,

Digitized by Google

enters into the paths of pride, selfishness, vices or passions, which mislead or degrade your humanity. These vices attract to themselves evil inspirations and influences, and thus drive away the divine inspiration, and then God and Jesus do not come to those who are ruled by them.

(25) I have spoken these things to you while abiding with you. (26) But the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, which my Father will send in my name, this shall teach you all things, and remind you of all things that I have said to you.

Jesus informed his disciples of the support that would be given them by the spirits of the Lord, who were appointed to aid them in their earthly mission. His promise here relates to their being taught everything necessary for the requirements of the age; but not universal knowledge. Whoever understands the words of Jesus differently would rightly reject them, for the future did not correspond with the promise, in this sense, and the Apostles were very far from knowing everything in the absolute and general sense of these expressions, whether as regards science, or the truth respecting the order of the revelations. The Spirit was veiled from them, and they walked, as was intended, like the generation to whom they spoke, amid the darkness of the letter, and under the influence of mystery and miracle.

When the idea contained in these words is rationally understood, according to the Spirit of Truth, they mean: "But the good and superior spirits whom God will send in my name to inspire and guide you, will teach you by inspiration everything necessary for the requirements of the age and for the fulfilment of your mission, and will cause you to remember, also by inspiration, everything which I have told you."

All the words of Jesus are applicable to the present, and include promises of the future. During the centuries which have passed since the accomplishment of their mission, the Apostles have learned much; and in the ages to come they will learn more. You have also learned much, and will long continue to learn, in proportion to your requirements,

Digitized by Google

until you shall be fitted to know all things, in the physical, moral and intellectual order; more especially intellectual, throughout eternity.

(27) Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (28) You have heard that I said to you, I go away, and come to you. If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

Jesus, in giving his peace to his disciples, gave them the conscience of duty done, the power of faith, and the blessedness of hope. In the eyes of his disciples, and of all other men, Jesus was liable to death, like themselves. Therefore, when he said, "If you loved me you would rejoice that I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I," he taught them to feel that true love should not lead to selfishness, and that man, instead of mourning over the loss of a dear friend, ought to rejoice, and thank God for his deliverance; for death delivers the spirit from its earthly prison, but is not a barrier which separates it from the friends whom it has left on earth. It is the conclusion of its trials, and thus the beginning of progress, and true love is not in the union of the body which it destroys, but in the union of souls, which it cannot injure, and which remains intact and immortal.

Observe how on every important occasion Jesus insists on his relative inferiority to the Creator. His words, "My Father is greater than I," were designed to strike the attention of those who have made him participate, it must be confessed, materially in God. If he had been a "distinct Person" (we speak from the "Christian" point of view, derived from human interpretations, which make Jesus a portion of the substance of the Father, and equal to him in power), he would have been equal to the Father, and would not have said, "My Father is greater than I."

(29) And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it happens, you may believe. (30) Henceforward I will not speak many things with you, for the ruler of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. (31) But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father has commanded me, so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

Digitized by Google

In verse 28 Jesus reminded his disciples of the allusions he had made to his apparent death and resurrection, his reappearance among them, and to his return into space at the period of the Ascension. He fixed their attention on his having predicted these events before they came to pass, that when these events had happened, and the prophecies should be fulfilled, they should possess a firm, unalterable faith in his mission, and should fulfil their own.

(V. 30.)—These words are figurative, and denote the anguish and uncertainty which overcome men at the approach of death, and which, in any other nature than his own, would overcome man at the moment of a sudden and violent death. He was inaccessible to these sufferings and uncertainties; but he was to appear to suffer them, in the eyes of men who believed him to be liable to human death like themselves, that the world should know that "he loves the Father, and obeys his commandments," and should understand that he has confidence in God, and obeys him with love and reverence; that he fulfils the mission which has been entrusted to him; and lastly, that his mission should thus be accomplished, and yield its fruits in the present and in the future; at first according to the letter, and then according to the Spirit, at the time, then future, of the Spirit of Truth.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSES 1–11.

Parable of the Vine and its shoots.

(1) I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. (2) Every shoot in me which beareth not fruit, he removes, and every one which bears fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. (3) You are pure already, through the word which I have spoken to you. (4) Abide in me, and I in you. As the shoot cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. (5) I am the vine; you are the shoots. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me, you can do nothing. (6) If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out like the shoot, and is withered, and they gather it and cast it into the fire, and it is burned. (7) If you remain in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you desire, and it shall be done for you. (8) In this shall my Father be glorified that you bear

Digitized by Google

much fruit; and you shall be my disciples. (9) As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you; abide in my love. (10) If you keep my commandments, remain in my love, as I have kept the commandments of my Father, and abide in his love. (11) I have said these things to you that my joy may abide in you, and your joy might be made full.

§ 50. In this figurative language, which was appropriate to the intelligence of the men of that period by the letter, and was intended to be explained and understood afterwards according to the Spirit, Jesus proclaims the superior and directing influence of the Creator over your humanity, by his mediation as the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet. He explains the methods of this development and progress, the conditions on which alone it can be secured; and the expiation which awaits those who wander from the paths which he has laid down. He also shows his disciples the bond of love which unites them to him, and the means of faithfully accomplishing their mission, which lies in the observance of the commandments which he has given them.

(V. 1.)—The words, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman," is another testimony to the inferior position of Jesus as compared with the Father.

(V. 2.)—Those who break the double command of God which Jesus has declared to include all the law and the Prophets, and which implies the observance of the Decalogue, and the obligation of all men acting towards others as they would have others act towards themselves, wander from the path traced out by Jesus, and are contented with evil. They are left in it in the inviolability of their free-will, but with the responsibility attaching to it; and in the fire of expiation, their evil deeds only produce ashes like burnt straw; and they are relegated to inferior conditions. But the Lord looks favourably on those who follow the paths traced out by the Master, and whose works are good. He enables them to improve themselves still more by trials and missions, that they may bear more and more fruit.

(V. 3.)—The disciples were already purified by the words which Jesus had spoken, and were prepared to accomplish their mission faithfully. They were advanced spirits, though in different degrees, whose intelligence and faculties were

Digitized by Google

paralyzed by their material envelope. The teaching of Jesus had assisted in developing their faculties, and their ardent desire to obey, and their boundless love for their Master urged them on still further in the path of progress; and they were to be assisted, directed and guided in the task which lay before them by the inspiration of the Spirits of the Lord.

(V. 4.)—These figurative words apply to all ages, and to all men. No one can bear good fruit (viz., good works) if he is detached from the vine, personified in Jesus, which is love and truth.

(V. 5, 6.)—Jesus is the vine, and all men like the disciples, are its shoots. He protects and rules them all, and he who perseveringly follows the morality which he preached, without turning aside, progresses and purifies himself, and advances rapidly, both morally and intellectually; and aided by the divine inspiration that Jesus transmits to him hierarchically by the superior and good spirits, bears much fruit, by his trials and missions.

If anyone does not remain in Jesus, he will be cast out like a withered shoot, and they gather them and cast them into the fire to be burned. If anyone does not follow the morality preached by Jesus, and departs from it in his practice, he falls into evil ways, and fails in his trials. He remains stationary, like every guilty spirit; and when the time has come for expiation, he will be burned in the fire of remorse, which will awaken in him the desire of reparation and progress, by means of new trials under the inferior conditions to which he will have been relegated.

(V. 7–11.)—The words, exhortations and promises addressed by Jesus to his disciples in these verses, equally apply to all who should become his disciples in future by walking in the path of love and truth which he has pointed out. These words require no comment, and may be summed up to include strength and power of faith; continual progress by the constant practice of the law of love; joy springing from peace of mind, purity and serenity of conscience; the satisfaction of duty performed, and personal and collective progress gained by trials and missions.

Digitized by Google

It is plain that those who abide in Jesus by remaining in the path which he has traced out, can only ask what is just and good, to be granted at the time and under the conditions which are fixed and determined by God alone. It is equally plain that Jesus, here as elsewhere, says nothing about the period at which the request will be granted.

VERSES 12–17.

Love one Another.

(12) This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. (13) No man hath greater love than he who should lay down life for his friends. (14) You are my friends, if you do whatsoever I have commanded you. (15) I call you no longer servants, for the servant does not know what his master doeth, but I call you friends, because I have made known to you all things which I have heard from my Father. (16) You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and appointed you that you may go and bear fruit, and your fruit should remain, that whatsoever you should ask of the Father in my name he should give it you. (17) These things I command you, that you love one another.

§ 51. These words, as usual, have a general application to all earnest men, both in the present and future; for all that the Master has said is a lesson for your humanity.

(V. 12, 13.)—Jesus commands his disciples to love one another as he has loved them; and thus to practise the law of love amongst themselves and towards all men, as he himself practised it, to its fullest extent. By this commandment he appeals to universal fraternity by reciprocity and general good feeling in love. Jesus gives men the greatest lesson contained in the Gospels, in teaching universal love on your earth. Is not pure and devoted love the actual source of all virtues, the foundation of duty, and the object of all aspirations? He who loves God can only strive with indefatigable zeal to obey the commandments which he has received from him. He ought to love his brethren with as much self-abnegation, devotion, and incessant charity, as he has been loved by him who "became man" to teach men love. His love should extend to all the beings of the Creation, for all are the work of the Father; all unite in his glory, and all are a living hymn in his honour.

Digitized by Google

(V. 14, 15.)—Whoever, like the disciples, follows the morality preached by the Master, and walks in the path which he has traced out in the fulfilment of his trials and missions, is his friend, for he thus responds to the efforts which Jesus makes for his development and progress, and proves his love for him. Thus sympathy becomes established between them; a fluidic attraction which purifies him, leads him to progress, and draws him nearer and nearer to his beloved Master.

The servant may be regarded as the disciple subject to the material law, who submits to it, without intelligence or pleasure, like a yoke which must be borne, because he cannot get rid of it. Those whom Jesus calls friends are those who, like the disciples, employ their reason to develope their heart, and feel their love and reason expand in proportion to their improved comprehension of the intentions and paternal goodness of the Sovereign whose law they delight to follow.

Jesus says, "I have called you my friends because I have taught you whatever I have heard from my Father." As regards the Apostles, Jesus taught them everything which it was his mission to teach them at that time. The Apostles were able to appreciate to a certain extent the providential views of the Father, and to understand the object of human life, and the law which governs it. Jesus taught them, under the veil of the letter, what he was commissioned to teach them, according to the conditions necessary for them to fulfil the task entrusted to them, that it should yield its fruits.

As regards the future: Besides the instructions which Jesus thus gave to the Apostles under the veil of the letter, he laid the foundations of those which were to follow, according to the Spirit. He made the roots sprout in the earth which should shoot up a solid trunk, on which branches loaded with fruit might be engrafted. In other words, he laid the foundations of the knowledge which you are developing at this moment, and which will always increase, and give you more and more claim to the title

Digitized by Google

of the Elect, by enabling you more and more to understand the cause of all things, and the object and secrets of the Divine will.

(V. 16.)—Certainly it was not the Apostles who chose Jesus, and conferred his earthly mission upon him. Certainly it was not spirits banished to an insignificant planet who chose him who in his devoted love, accepted its guidance. He whose purity made him the Son of the Living God, undertook to draw the elements of your planet from chaos or fluidic space, gave them direction, and in a sense, life, and provided for the progress of intelligence and of matter. He undertook his earthly mission, and selected his disciples for their personal progress and the collective progress of your humanity, to fulfil their mission, the fruits of which will remain imperishably as the starting point of fresh progress, which the innumerable phalanx of missionary spirits, also appointed by the Master, continue to prepare and to accomplish, both in the present and future.

It was he who chose the disciples, as he chooses all earnest men, that the Father may give them whatever experiences and missions they shall ask in the Master's name. Everything that man asks from the Father by invoking the sublime idea of the Son, will be granted him; for the man who understands the power of such a request, cannot ask anything contrary to the general good. He has no selfish views, and no personal aspirations, but desires the happiness of his fellow-men, the progress of all creatures, and the development of the love of God, and of charity; these are the thoughts which inspire his prayers, and it is such prayers which the Lord always fulfils; not like a father who gives a child a toy which he will break directly, because he does not know how brittle it is, but like the wise father who says to his son, "What you ask is right and fitting, and what you desire shall be done when the fitting moment arrives;" and since man knows that he has eternity before him, and knows that it is not merely necessary for him to progress, but that all around him, from the invisible monad to the incarnate genius, progress and raise them-

Digitized by Google

selves, he waits with confidence, knowing that whatever he asks will be given him, because all he asks is good and just.

(V. 17.)—Jesus repeats the commandment which he had just given to his disciples, to love one another. The practice of love was the source and means of all progress and elevation for the disciples, as well as for all other men; the only path of success in trials and missions, and the only means by which your humanity can effect its ascending march towards the superior worlds.

VERSES 18–27.

Jesus warns his Disciples of Persecution.

§ 52. (18) If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before you.

You can understand that the inferior incarnate spirits who did not follow the law of love natural to the heart of man, would hate him who is all love. But this expression is not to be understood literally, in the sense that it would bear in your language. It is not a feeling of personal hatred which is meant; but Jesus uses the word to express want of attraction to himself, and consequent disinclination to submit to the inspirations which he and the good spirits have never ceased to communicate to men, according to their condition and development.

(19) If you were of the world, the world would love its own, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

The Apostles and most of the first disciples were spirits who were already advanced, and who had accepted this incarnation for the purpose of forwarding the Master's work, and working at their own progress by promoting that of their brethren. They would, therefore, naturally excite the same feelings of animosity which existed towards the Master; and that, as in his case, would bring upon them violence, physical persecutions, and even in most cases a violent death, not for any personal reason, but on account of the doctrine which they were commissioned to teach.

Digitized by Google

You thus see that there was no predestination in these words of Jesus. In reflecting on expressions which appear to imply its existence, you should always remember that every advanced or superior spirit on a mission, who is incarnated in corruptible flesh, becomes fallible again, that being thus chosen out of the world, he may, in consequence of his fallibility, be to a certain extent, of the world, and the world may love him as its own. He becomes fallible again, not like an inferior spirit, but relatively to his nature. Never forget that the flesh is an intractable instrument which must be perseveringly watched over. You must not suppose that a superior spirit who accepts a mission on your earth, and does not accomplish it entirely without weakness, can retrograde; but the progress which he might have acquired by this act of devotion is proportioned to the greater or less efforts which he has made to struggle against the defects inherent in your earthly humanity.

(20) Remember the saying which I spoke to you, The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my word, they will keep yours also. (21) But they will do all these things to you on account of my name; because they know not him that sent me.

We have already explained the words repeated by Jesus, (§ 44, pp.196,197). As applied to the disciples, the words literally mean that as they were not greater than the Master, they could not escape persecution, since he had been persecuted. They have no further meaning from a material point of view, but, in a spiritual sense, have a very wide application.

From the Catholic and Christian point of view, whatever the difference between them, the soul created for the servant may be equal in the sight of God to the soul created for the master, but there is no reason for their different destinies. The servant may fail in the fulfilment of his task; the master may abuse his authority and power, and if both should fulfil their destinies, that of the master has always been more favoured than that of the servant, which implies a preference and inequality. Let not the Church say that the servant will receive a greater reward after death than his master. This cannot be, for if the master has done all the good in

Digitized by Google

his power, he has accomplished his task; and if the servant has fulfilled all his duties with zeal, devotion and resignation, he has also fulfilled his task; and does he deserve a greater reward? By what right should he receive more than his master? Did he choose his inferior position himself? Why should his master be inferior to him? Did he ask to command him? Let the Church answer.

Whichever way you turn the question, if you overlook reincarnation, the recompense of the past, and the agent of progress for the future, you will inevitably convert God, who is Eternal Justice, into a capricious sovereign, governing according to his own good pleasure.

From the spiritual point of view, he who is the servant to-day has been the master yesterday, and will be to-morrow. It is the same with his master; he who is the master to-day was the servant yesterday, and will be to-morrow. Thus there is a complete equality between them, according to the law of reincarnation. There is neither favour nor chance, but only justice, which leads to inequality between men.

Let this thought penetrate the human heart thoroughly, and the master will be the friend and support of the servant, and the servant will be the consolation and the devoted brother of his master; and without overturning social order, or shedding human blood to attain the sweet promises of liberty, fraternity, and equality, men will behold unity, unbounded liberty, unrestricted fraternity, and universal love extend themselves over the earth.

As regards persecutions, you know that the name of Jesus represents and personifies the law which he preached. Consequently, those who had already attained to some degree of progress possessed either a previous knowledge or an intuition of the law of love which the words of Jesus newly awakened in their minds and hearts. Those who were still too backward, and delighted in pride and evil, would not accept this law, and rejected everything which seemed to them to come from the person of Jesus, not understanding the primal source whence all good is derived: God.

Digitized by Google

Is it not the same among you? Are there not many in your orthodox churches and sects who are exclusive and intolerant, "children of Abraham," who look upon the Father only as an avenging God, jealous and exclusive in his love, and who regard themselves as sole heirs of the kingdom of God? Men still know little of him who sent his Messiah to regenerate your humanity. The consequence is that among those who call themselves Christians, Jesus has absorbed and personified, in the eyes of the majority, the God who is the Master and Creator of the universe, in infinity and eternity. Hence the special worship which is addressed to him, the divinity in which he has been made to participate, and a complicated method of reconciling the Hebrew ideas with those of the Gentiles.

(22) If I had not come and spoken to them, they had had no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

If these words are imperfectly understood, they convey an idea of a determinate destiny for man; for the omniscient God must know when he sent his Messiah among men, what a vast number would not receive him, and would thus condemn their souls, according to the Catholic doctrine, to the tortures of an eternal hell. O human folly!

The spirits who were incarnated at that period, like all those who assume a material envelope, would have to labour for their advancement, and the means of success were promised to them. It was, therefore, their duty to recognize and avail themselves of them when they had an opportunity. It was thus that all were required to listen to the voice which promised them peace if they would learn to work the works of peace; but they forgot their spiritual resolutions, or gave way to their evil propensities, and closed their ears and their heart.

If Christ had not descended among them as it had been foretold, their judgment would not have been the same, because the incarnate spirits would not have had the same opportunities of advancing; but when the voice from on high made itself heard, those who voluntarily closed their ears against it, made themselves guilty of rejecting "the

Digitized by Google

olive-branch" which was held out to them, and thus condemned themselves to swim still longer in the whirlpool of vice; and what we say applies not only to the few who gathered round Jesus at the time of his mission, but to all who refuse to see and hear what is shown them for the purpose of their moral improvement. Our words do not apply simply to those who reject the law of Jesus (by which you are to understand the law of love) on your continent; but to all who have received opportunities of improving themselves, and have rejected them. These call down judgment upon themselves by refusing mercy. One further explanation, for it is needful to be clear and definite to human ears. By mercy we do not mean a favour granted by the Father to one of his children rather than to another; but the means given to man to progress; the light sent to him under any form, or in any name, and which he is at liberty to accept or reject by using his personal will.

(23) He who hates me, hates my Father also. (24) If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. (25) But so it is that the saying might be fulfilled which is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

To hate God and his messenger is to refuse to follow the law of God, which is the law of love which Jesus preached, and consequently to remove oneself indefinitely from the Father, by refusing to receive his envoy; for love is the only feeling which can lead us there. Is it not hating the Father if you only refuse to rise to him? Is not love the lever which lifts man to unite himself to the Giver of all blessings, in an emotion of gratitude and joy?

The spirit who has an opportunity of progressing, and refuses to do so, chains himself down to his inferiority, for the character of his own fluids holds him down in the spheres which correspond to his state as long as his desire to progress has not purified him; for his free will and intelligence permit him either to remain stationary or to advance. He himself, and his desires and instincts, establish corresponding conditions, according to the nature of the spiritual attraction to which they give rise. Thus he either subjects

Digitized by Google

himself to the laws of stagnation, suffering and expiation, or to those of progress, under the empire of the Divine Providence, the modes of whose action have already been revealed to you, to a certain extent, from your human point of view, by the spiritual revelation.

(V. 25.)—It is true that nothing takes place by what you call accident. There always exists a cause for everything; and it is only your ignorance of the cause which leads you to attribute anything to chance. The condition and circumstances of the progress of the Hebrew nation, when this saying was spoken by the prophet, under unconscious divine inspiration, gave the measure of what the people would be at the time of the appearance of the Messiah; for you know that the past, present, and future, as it exists to you inferior creatures, is nothing to God, but everything is constantly and instantaneously enrolled before him in eternity.

"They hated me without a cause." Could man have any reason for holding himself aloof from the Lord? Had the men who lived during the earthly mission of Jesus any cause for holding aloof from him?

(26) But when the Comforter shall come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall bear witness of me. (27) And you also shall bear witness, because you are with me from the beginning.

In these words Jesus included the present, with regard to the development of the Apostles and of their mission; and the future, with regard to the new era opening before you, and the period towards which you are advancing. The Spirit of Truth proceeding from the Father is light, knowledge, and truth, which is brought to men by the messengers of God, whether errant or incarnate spirits. The errant spirits deliver it to men by inspiration or medianimic action, and the incarnate spirits by their word. As regards the Apostles, the Spirit of Truth which Jesus was about to send them was the Spirits of the Lord, who were to aid, inspire, and guide them; to develop their personal faculties, and to supply whatever was wanting by their medianimic action, both spiritual and fluidic. This assistance was given to

Digitized by Google

enable them to bear witness to Jesus; or, in other words, to his doctrine, the words which he pronounced, and the actions which he performed during his earthly mission, and the events which then took place.

Jesus said, "You also shall bear witness of me, because you have been with me from the beginning." As the Apostles had been incarnated with a view to his mission, they had been with him from its commencement.

As regards the future. By the Spirit of Truth, whose coming Jesus announced, you must understand the Spirits of the Lord, whether errant or incarnate, his new messengers, who would be sent to you at the time of the new era, and at the period towards which you are advancing, to finish the diffusion of the Truth throughout the world.

And new incarnate messengers will come to bear witness of him by their word, by preaching charity and love by example, and by progressively diffusing the light, knowledge, and truth which proceed from the Omnipotent Lord, and which Jesus personifies to your planet, and which he will himself complete and sanctify by showing you the unveiled truth, when the purity of your hearts and the development of your intelligence shall have made you capable and worthy to receive and understand it.

The spirit messengers of the Lord, both errant and incarnate, bring man the knowledge of the Truth relative to his intelligence; and his conscience receives it, or closes itself against it. The man who receives the Spirit of Truth is he whose conscience is enlightened by these messengers of the Lord, and understands things which were previously hidden from him.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSES 1–15.

Predictions of Jesus.

§ 53. (1) I have told you these things, that you should not be offended.

Digitized by Google

Having been forewarned of the fate which awaits every missionary in the midst of backward spirits, you will accept it as an inevitable consequence. These words also contain a warning to all who should undertake a mission of truth amid refractory and backward surroundings. They apply in your own days, and in future times, to the Apostles of the New Revelation, who must accept the fate which awaits them, according to the circumstances under which they fulfil their task, and the state and progress of civilization of the backward spirits whom they address.

(2) They shall cast you out of the synagogues, but the time will come when whosoever killeth you shall think that he offers a service to God. (3) And they shall do these things to you because they have not known the Father, nor me. (4) But I have told you these things, that when the time shall come, you should remember that I have told you of these things.

The thought of Jesus included all who preach the truth by contending against abuses and vices. Those who have practised intolerance, fanaticism, and persecution towards the disciples, and have put them to death, believing that they were acting agreeably to God, acted thus because they knew neither the Father, who is the God of universal and infinite love; nor Jesus, who is the messenger of the Lord and the emblem of the law of love; nor did they know the grandeur and the object of his mission, which was the regeneration of humanity by justice, love, and charity, and thus by fraternity among all men. Those who have acted thus from the time of the Apostles until your own days, and shed human blood to please the Lord, have done so because they also knew not the Father and Jesus, but have misunderstood and insulted them by treading under foot the law of love, which itself implies the liberty of the Lord; that is, the liberty of reason, free inquiry, conscience, and therefore of tolerance and charity. Men, do not reject the light and truth offered you by the New Revelation, which leads you to know the Father and Jesus. When you know them you will no longer practise either moral or physical persecution, and will shed no more human blood, but will walk under the influence of the Spirit of Truth, in the path of

Digitized by Google

progress, with that liberty which the Lord has conferred upon man as the privilege of his free will. This consists of reason, free inquiry, and conscience, and you will then be able to use it by practising tolerance and charity.

(4) And I told you not these things at the beginning, because I was with you. (5) And now I go to him that sent me, and none of you asks me, Whither goest thou? (6) But because I have said these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. (7) But I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go away, I will send him to you.

While Jesus was on earth, the Apostles and the other disciples remained in uncertainty respecting his mission and its consequences, and it was only after the consummation of the sacrifice that the revelation was to be made to them. The Comforter, whom Jesus was to send to his disciples, denotes the spirit messengers of the Lord, who were to aid them in the fulfilment of their mission. The Comforter was at the time a personification of the Spirit of Truth, and the Apostles were also to be a personification of the Spirit of Truth to the period, for they were also the messengers of the Lord, missionaries incarnated to teach men light, knowledge and truth, in proportion to the intelligence and requirements of the age. But the personification and mission of the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, were not limited to the times of the Apostles. It was needful for him to complete the task which he had begun, through the errant or incarnate Spirits of the Lord; his new messengers, sent as missionaries to aid your humanity in its efforts to advance in the path of truth.

(8) And when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. (9) Of sin, because they believe not in me. (10) And of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more. (11) And of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

The incarnate spirits in that part of the world where Jesus accomplished his mission, were required, as a trial, to accept or to reject the light which was offered them. Those who rejected it forfeited their engagements, and plunged themselves deeper into evil. It is the same at every epoch

Digitized by Google

of your planet. The spirits who were incarnated before and after the mission of Jesus, were also required, as a trial, to accept or reject the light which was offered them; and those who rejected it forfeited their engagements. It is the same with the spirits incarnated in your own days, who reject what is offered them, and with those who will reject what will hereafter be offered them. But you must not forget that much is expected from him to whom much is given, and that the responsibility of the spirit is always in proportion to the means placed at his disposal for improvement.

(V. 9).—This refers to those who transgress the divine law because they do not believe in the mission of Jesus, and have therefore not accepted and practised the morality which he preached. Consequently they have broken their engagements, and plunged themselves deeper into evil. Men are required to understand what many have already acknowledged, and what all will finally acknowledge; that whoever does not follow the morality preached by Jesus, transgresses the divine law, and by refusing to practise it, is guilty, and liable to the judgment. This is the mission of the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, which began by the mission of the Apostles, and will still continue that the world may be convinced.

(V. 10).—Those who are convinced concerning justice, are those who are struck with the shining proofs of the mission, yield to the evidence, and believe; submitting to the law of universal love which Jesus preached.

The words, "because I go to my Father, and you see me no more," relate to the death of Jesus, and the subsequent events until his return into space at the time of the Ascension. These proofs enlightened most of the sceptics of the age; and the present revelation brings them prominently forward, by explaining them in spirit and in truth, and thus supporting the Gospels by all the power of reason, revelation, and spiritual science.

The Spirit of Truth will convince the world of justice relative to faith in the divine mission of Jesus, and in the

Digitized by Google

universal love which he preached, because he suffered death, rose again, and reappeared to the women and the disciples, and then disappeared from the sight of men when he rose into space at the period of the Ascension. Men have been required to recognize the divine mission of Jesus, and to submit to the law of universal love which he preached. Many have acknowledged his mission, and all will acknowledge it; many have submitted to this law, and all will submit to it; and this also is the mission of the Spirit of Truth, which began by the mission of the Apostles, and will still continue until the world shall be convinced.

(V. 11.)—The judgment is retribution, according to works. Man himself provokes it by his thoughts and desires, and receives it by his words and actions, in accordance with the immutable and eternal laws of justice which his conscience applies after death. His vicious propensities and guilty actions expose him to the inevitable laws of suffering, expiation, and reincarnation—the only means of reparation, purification, and progress, and the only road to perfection. "The prince of this world is judged," is a figurative expression denoting the evil propensities, contrary to the divine law, and the evil actions which have been judged in the past. Have not evil deeds met with their due from the beginning; that is, ever since the appearance of man upon your planet; and have not the evil thoughts which spring up and develop in your hearts, also suffered judgment from the beginning? Thus it is that "the ruler of this world is already judged;" and the words of Jesus apply to all ages, since they apply to fallible nature, and to evil under all its forms. Has not the judgment already taken place in the case of each of you, from the first human incarnation until your own times? Will it not take place at the period of the purification of your planet, as regards the guilty, rebellious, and wilfully blind spirits who will then be removed from your earth, and cast down to the inferior planets?

The Spirit of Truth will convince the world of judgment and retribution according to works; the retribution which is deserved by, and is executed upon, evil propensities and

Digitized by Google

actions contrary to the divine law, which always meet with their just retribution and judgment.

Men have been required to acknowledge this retribution and judgment. Many have done so already, and all will ultimately recognize it. This is also the mission of the Spirit of Truth, which will continue, that the world may be convinced. And the world will be convinced, for the Spirit of Truth brings men the knowledge of what the judgment really is, by revelation and spiritual science, and by the present revelation, which frees the spirit from the letter.

(12) I have still many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now.

Progress is the law of nature, and everything must progress; matter as well as intelligence. The dress intended for a man would embarrass a little child, and would cause him to stumble at every step.

Although the Apostles were more developed spiritually than their contemporaries, their human incarnation rendered it needful for them to be helped to walk, and to advance by short steps; but not to be pushed on at a fast pace which they would have been unable to keep up. The knowledge which was given them was in proportion to the necessities of the age. The Holy Spirit manifested itself to their eyes on the day of Pentecost, and gave them the knowledge which they required. But times have changed; intellectual development has advanced, at first slowly, and then, quickening its pace, has begun to advance rapidly. The Spirit of Truth has revealed himself from time to time, to display the light which should guide mankind in its researches; and the time is not far distant when he will place it within the comprehension of all, open the eyes of the most blind, and cause his voice to be heard by the deafest consciences.

(13) And when the Spirit of Truth shall come, he will guide you to all truth; for he will not speak from himself, but whatsoever he has heard he will speak, and will announce to you things to come.

"He will guide you to all truth." The spirits of the Lord have at all times taught men light, knowledge, and truth, relative to the intelligence and necessities of every age.

Digitized by Google

But here Jesus alludes to the new era upon which you are entering, and to the period when man, guided by the superior spirits, will receive the teachings of the Lord to their fullest extent, including the source and object of this special favour; but man has still much to learn, and to advance and purify himself before arriving at this point.

"The Spirit of Truth will teach you all truth," for his task is to hold up the light which should guide man in his researches, and aid him to advance further and further, with renewed energy, on the path of moral, physical, and intellectual progress.

"He will not speak from himself, but whatsoever he has heard he will speak." The divine messengers in the errant state speak what proceeds from the Lord, and what has been hierarchically communicated to them, and which they are charged to transmit to men. The divine messengers in the incarnate state will not speak of themselves, but under divine inspiration, and will speak what they have received, either by clairaudience or inspiration, and thus, what they have heard.

"He will announce things to come;" at present, when you are beginning to enter upon the new era, the meaning is nearly the same, and is more extended as regards the future. He announces things to come, not like fortune-tellers, but by shedding light upon portions of the Messianic revelation which have remained obscure beneath the veil of the letter. He instructs men concerning their future destiny, and in the knowledge of the obligations necessary to be fulfilled to secure the accomplishment of the progress of matter as well as intelligence, by purity and perfection.

The mission of the Spirit of Truth has begun, for the things which were announced as about to take place have already commenced. The spirits of the Lord have already begun to descend among you, and his errant and incarnate missionaries have begun to shed light on what has hitherto remained obscure in the Messianic Revelation. They have begun to give you truth in proportion to what you are able to understand, to guide humanity in its researches, and to aid it to advance.

Digitized by Google

This mission of the Spirit of Truth will continue, for your generation will not pass away until it has seen its first Messianic years; and you must be led onwards to that period when man will be guided by the superior spirits, and will receive the teachings of the Lord in their fullest extent. These will be delivered by his great messengers, the precursors of the advent of Jesus.

(14) He shall glorify me, for he shall receive from me, and shall announce it to you. (15) All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine, therefore I said that he taketh from me, and announces it to you.

Jesus expresses himself thus relative to your planet and to your humanity. Being your protector and ruler, he confers on the spirits who labour at this work under his direction, the missions which they are to fulfil, either in the errant or in the incarnate state, and arranges the nature and period of every mission, under the inspiration of the omnipotent Lord, with whom he is constantly in direct communion.

The Spirit of Truth glorifies Jesus, and will glorify him more and more. Is not the mission of these spirit-messengers to lead you to understand the law of God, and the methods of fulfilling it? Is not the glory of Jesus your progress and development, by practising the morality which he preached to you, and which the Spirit of Truth comes to urge you to follow, by explaining it to you in spirit and in truth? Is it not in your more and more rapid advance in the path of charity and love, light, knowledge, and truth, aided by the Spirit of Truth?

VERSES 16–22.

Jesus promises his Disciples Joy after Sorrow.

(16) A little while, and you shall not see me; and again a little while, and you shall see me, because I go to the Father. (17) Then some of his disciples said to the others, What is this which he says? A little while, and you shall not see me; and again a little while, and you shall see me; and because I go to the Father? (18) Then they said, What is this little time that he speaks of? We do not understand what he says. (19) Then Jesus knew that they wished to ask him, and said to them, Do you debate with one another about this, because I said, A little while and you shall not see me, and again a little while, and you shall see me? (20) Verily, verily, I say unto you that you shall weep

Digitized by Google

and lament, and the world shall rejoice; and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned unto joy. (21) When the woman is in labour, she hath sorrow because her hour is come; but when she has brought forth the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, through the joy that a man is born into the world. (22) Therefore, you also have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and no one taketh your joy from you.

§ 53. V. 16. alludes to the apparent death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. The words he used in answer to the question of his disciples are not explicit. He wished to leave them to be understood after the sacrifice, and also desired that the recollection of his words should make an impression on the minds of his disciples, when the events to which they related should be accomplished.

VERSES 23–33.

Predictions of Jesus.

(23) And in that day you shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give you. (24) Until now you have asked nothing in my name; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be completed. (25) I have spoken these things to you in parables, but the hour cometh when I shall no longer speak to you in parables, but will tell you openly of the Father. (26) In that day you shall ask in my name, and I tell you not that I will beseech the Father for you. (27) For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came from God. (28) I proceeded from the Father, and have come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. (29) The disciples say to him, Behold, now speakest thou openly, and speakest no parable. (30) Now we know that thou knowest all things, and needed not that anyone should ask thee; by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. (31) Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? (32) Behold the hour cometh, and is now come, that each of you shall be scattered to his own affairs, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. (33) I have spoken these things to you that you might have peace in me. You shall have affliction in the world; but be of good cheer; I have conquered the world.

§ 54. The explanations which you have already received should enable you to understand these verses according to the Spirit.

(V. 23, 24).—Jesus again repeats his words, to assure the Apostles of the power which their faith would give them.

(V. 25, 26.)—Jesus here alludes to the period when the Apostles would be freed from the flesh, and to the progress

Digitized by Google

which awaited them after disincarnation, when they would no longer receive veiled teachings, like those which he had hitherto given them, but lessons proportioned to their degree of advancement. Then they would profit by the progress that they had acquired by the mission which they had successfully accomplished. When they had returned to their own spiritual nature, they would receive the divine inspiration, according to the hierarchical and progressive order, under the impulse and direction of the Master.

When these words are thus explained, they apply to every spirit who has worthily fulfilled his terrestrial obligations, like the Apostles, and who is able, when he returns into space, to profit by the progress which he has made, and to approach nearer and nearer to the Master, to receive his instructions more directly.

(V. 27, 28.)—The disciples had the protection of the Lord, because they had listened to the word of Jesus, and had retained it to scatter through the world by teaching and example, and because they had believed in his Divine mission and celestial origin, though without fully comprehending it.

In verse 28, Jesus bears witness, under the veil of the letter, to his spiritual elevation and extra-human nature and origin. In bearing witness to his mission, he announces its close, and his return to the regions whence he descended, and therefore his return to his own spiritual nature, which places him in constant communion with the Father.

(V. 29–31.)—These words, like all those in which Jesus alludes to his origin, nature, and position, include the letter on one side, and the spirit on the other. The letter was appropriate to the intelligence and faculties of the incarnate Apostles, and to the necessities of that and future ages, until your own days, when the new revelation has become necessary, and is given you according to the will of the Lord. It was the letter which confirmed the faith of the Apostles. They could not form a clear idea of the Master's origin. They believed him to be sprung from God, though

Digitized by Google

they had no fixed idea of the divinity which was afterwards attributed to him. It was only after the subsequent events that their ideas became concentrated upon this view, which seemed to them, in their ignorance of the true meaning of the words of Jesus, to be the best fitted to explain his power and virtue.

(V. 31–33.)—Jesus predicts to his disciples their dispersion after his arrest, and at the time of his condemnation and execution. He also foretells the persecutions, and physical and moral sufferings, which await them in the fulfilment of their mission. "But be of good cheer," he says, "I have conquered the world." Jesus conquered the world by his earthly mission, for he laid the foundations of the human regeneration which he promised and predicted, by the Spirit of Truth; and he will complete it by his own return to your planet, when it shall be purified, to lead its equally purified creatures to perfection.

CHAPTER XVII.

VERSES 1–26.

Prayer of Jesus.

(1) Jesus spoke these things, and raised his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy son, that thy son may also glorify thee. (2) As thou hast given him authority over all flesh, that he should give age-lasting life to all whom thou hast given him. (3) And this is age-lasting life, that they should know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. (4) I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou hast given me to do. (5) And now, Father, glorify me with thyself, by the glory which I had with thee before the world was. (6) I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given me out of the world, and thou hast given me them, and they have kept thy word. (7) Now they know that all things whatsoever which thou hast given me are from thee. (8) Because I have given them the words which thou hast given me; and they have received them, and know truly that I came forth from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. (9) I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine. (10) And all mine are thine, and thine mine, and I am glorified in them. (11) And I am no longer in the world; but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep these in thy name whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, like us. (12) When I was with them

Digitized by Google

in the world, I kept them in thy name. I protected those whom thou hast given me, and none of them is lost, except the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled. (13) And now I come to thee, and I speak all things in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in them. (14) I have given them thy word, and the world hated them because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world. (15) I ask not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. (16) They are not of the world, as I am not of the world. (17) Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth. (18) As thou hast sent me into the world, I have also sent them into the world. (19) And I sanctify myself for them, that they also may be sanctified in truth. (20) And I pray not for these alone, but also for those who believe in me through their word. (21) That they may all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. That the world may believe that thou hast sent me. (22) And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one. (23) I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in me, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and may love them, as thou hast loved me. (24) Father, I desire that those whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may see my glory which thou hast given me, for thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world. (25) O righteous Father, the world also knew thee not, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. (26) And I have made known to them thy name, and will make it known, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

§ 55. Jesus pronounced these words in a loud voice, to impress the imagination of those who heard them, that they might be fixed in their memory, and might be useful to the Apostles and their imitators, in the present and future, and be transmitted to future generations, from age to age, to be a lesson to men. They are of the greatest importance in reference to the new revelation, which will explain them in spirit and in truth.

(V. 1-3.)—Jesus declares that the hour has come for the sacrifice which was to be accomplished for the progress of men, whose guidance he had accepted from the origin of the world, that he might lead them to eternal life, which is the life of the pure spirits. He asks God to permit him to accomplish this sacrifice, which was one of the phases of the earthly mission by which he undertook to lead men to repentance and universal progress. He again bears testimony to the indivisible Unity of the Father by the words, "Thou art the only true God"—thus rejecting beforehand the divinity which men afterwards attributed to him. He

Digitized by Google

again bears witness to his mission relative to your planet and its humanity, by saying that his Father has given him power over all men, that he may give eternal life to those whom the Father has given him; that is, to those who are earnest in the choice and fulfilment of their trials and missions.

Eternal life consists in knowing the Father, and comprehending the essence of God, by the ultimate acquisition of the perfect purity which alone permits spirits to approach him, and to be in direct union with him, and thus to become more and more initiated into the secrets of the Divine will, to progress eternally in universal knowledge, in the incessant activity of works and missions, during the eternal life of the pure spirits.

But, in order thus to acquire the eternal life which consists in knowing the Father, it is also necessary first to know Jesus Christ, whom the Father has sent; that is, to understand the essence, origin, and nature of Jesus; his mission relative to your planet and its humanity; and his earthly mission, and the results which it ought to yield, both by itself and by the accomplishment of the promises and predictions which it contains. To know Jesus also, means to acquire the purity and perfection which can alone enable a spirit to approach him, and to be led by him to the life of the pure spirits.

(V. 4, 5.)—Jesus declares that his public mission of teaching among men has reached its end. He has glorified God on earth by pointing out to humanity the paths of progress, purification, and regeneration, which should lead them to the Father.

In verse 5 Jesus alludes to his approaching death. Do not overlook the words spoken before, which we have already explained (x. 17, 18, pp. 156, 157).

(V. 6–8.)—Jesus affirms that he has given his disciples the knowledge of God, as far as required by the necessities of the age. They had accepted the advice of their guides in the selection of their trials and missions, and were sufficiently purified to accomplish them well. They had heard

Digitized by Google

and obeyed the morality which he preached, and the lessons which God had commanded him to convey to men, and had acknowledged him as the messenger of the Father.

(V. 9–11.)—The disciples had still to undergo severe trials (we do not now speak of expiations); and it was in order to strengthen them that Jesus pronounced these words, the sense of which you can understand, according to the Spirit, by the explanations which you have already received upon similar passages.

The word prayer may be understood from different points of view. It appears to men like the promise of a divine support. From a spiritual point of view, prayer is an emanation of the purest fluids, bringing strength and support to its objects, even against their will. It is moral magnetism, working at a distance, in a manner which it is difficult to explain, but which may perhaps be intelligible to those who have studied the action of the magnetic fluids. What is the action of the magnetizer, whose fluids encompass a subject by his will alone, and give him strength, or render him immovable; open vaster horizons to him, or envelope him in darkness, and allay his sufferings, or cause him to endure fictitious ones?

Prayer acts on the same principle, but in a purer manner. The power of the will and love of the spirit disengages subtle fluids, which enwrap those for whom prayer is made, and these fluids have the power of strengthening, enlightening, and instructing the suffering souls. But this action has more power over the free soul than over the incarnate, who is too much oppressed by matter to feel its beneficent effects, which are, nevertheless, not lost; and when the spirit is once disincarnated, it always profits by the help which was insufficient for it during incarnation.

When Jesus said, "That they may also be one like us," he taught his disciples that there should be communion of thought between them, as between Jesus and the Father, that they might be one in thought, as Jesus and the Father are one in thought.

(V. 12.)—Remember what we have told you respecting

Digitized by Google

Judas. It was known that Judas had not strength to resist the trial which he had asked. He had been forewarned by his guides, but his pride led him to persist; and he was permitted to undertake it; and thus he became the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

(V. 13.)—Jesus again referred to the prediction which he had already uttered respecting the treason of Judas, that the disciples might remember what he had said to them, and that his words might be one more guarantee of his mission, and a support in the difficulties which lay before them.

(V. 14–16.)—The Apostles were "not of the world," for they were more elevated than the spirits who were then incarnated; and who, being more backward than themselves, "hated them;" not personally, but on account of the Word of God which they had received from the Master, who also, much more than the Apostles, was not of the world; for he was a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, accomplishing a superior mission, which, as regards its results, was addressed rather to future generations, and especially to the new era now opening before you, than to the men of that period.

By the words, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil," Jesus taught his disciples that they must mingle with men to accomplish their mission, but must accomplish it faithfully by guarding against their vices and passions.

(V. 17.)—Jesus asks God to sanctify his disciples; that is, to cause them to progress in truth, by the knowledge of the virtues which they were to diffuse. "Thy word is truth," said Jesus. The Word of God, which is transmitted to men by his errant or incarnate messengers, always gives them the truth which man ought to know, relatively to the age, until the Master shall return to your planet to show you the unveiled truth.

(V. 18, 19.)—As Jesus had received a mission on earth, he had also permitted faithful spirits to come there on a mission likewise, always relative to their degree of advancement, and their progress or sanctification was always in

Digitized by Google

proportion to their mission, and the manner in which it was accomplished. Even in the case of pure spirits, whatever superiority they may have acquired in universal knowledge, progress is the recompense of their labours and missions for the advancement of their errant and incarnate brethren of all degrees.

(V. 20.)—Jesus thus made known to the world that what he said respecting the Apostles, likewise applied to all who should listen to their words and teachings, and should believe in his mission, and accept and practise the morality which he preached, and should thus become their imitators, and consequently his disciples; as well as to all others who should in future preach good by example as well as by precept.

Jesus promises all men, like the Apostles, relatively to the age in which they live, the truth which they ought to know, and progress and purification by trials and missions faithfully accomplished.

(V. 21.)—Jesus prays that all may be united in love and devotion, and may be one only in thought, as God is one with Jesus in thought; and that they may also be one in God and in Jesus, by the purification which draws the creature nearer and nearer to the Creator, and by the divine inspiration which Jesus receives immediately from the Father, and transmits hierarchically to them, that the world may believe that Christ was the messenger of God, and may thus believe in his mission.

(V. 22.)—Jesus alludes to the knowledge which he has given his disciples of his origin and mission, and of the unity of thought between the Father and himself. He also alludes to the influence which this knowledge should exercise on the relations of the disciples among themselves.

(V. 23).—In these words Jesus expresses the idea that he, who is himself inspired and guided by the Omnipotent, inspires and guides his disciples, and all earnest men, in the accomplishment of their trials and missions; that communion of thought may unite them in love and devotion among themselves and towards their brethren. Thus, they

Digitized by Google

will arrive at the same degree of purification (for the unity of spirits is equality of purification); and the world will then perceive that he was the messenger of the Father; and will understand his mission more and more, and that the divine grace which is extended over the Master is also extended over his disciples—that is, the Lord has aided them in the fulfilment of their task, and has given them means of progress proportioned to their degree of purification; and thus God has loved them as he has loved Jesus.

The word *love*, in speaking of the Creator, relates to the purification of the spirit, and is relative to the degree of purity which it has attained. The divine favour extends equally to every spirit who has arrived at the same point of disengagement from matter and its influences.

(V. 24.)—Jesus prayed aloud; and the desire he thus expresses signifies that he wishes to sustain his disciples, and all his faithful followers who seek for light, knowledge, and truth, to lead men to repentance and universal progress; in order that, when their task is accomplished, they may rise from progress to progress, to him, by their trials and missions. When the spirits have attained to the regions where Jesus watches over the progress of your planet and its humanity, they will behold his glory, and will strive more and more to unite themselves with his love and devotion.

In the second part of verse 24 Jesus alludes to the mission which God has confided to him as the protector of your planet, as well as to the phases of his mission, and to the results to which it should lead, as regards the progress of both matter and intelligence, from the moment of its formation until the days of its purification, complete transformation, and ascent to the purely fluidic regions. Such is the glory which God gave Jesus by entrusting him with this mission, because he had confidence in him already, before creating the materials and elements of the planet. God knew that his acquired knowledge, and the progress which he had made in universal science, would enable him to accomplish it faithfully. And this mission was a reward and encouragement to him, as to every spirit who is appointed the protector of a planet.

Digitized by Google

Lastly, we must call your attention to the first part of verse 24. Jesus does not pray that his disciples may be with him where he is going, but where he is, and thus again asserts his extra-human nature, by virtue of which he was always a spirit under his tangible fluidic envelope, and free to inhabit the ethereal regions, which are the throne of his glory as the protector of your planet; and not as an inhabitant of the earth, like man, who is bound down to it by material human incarnation.

(V. 25.)—Jesus asserts that men have neither comprehended God in his essence, nor the secret designs of his providence, in the mission which he has entrusted to himself. But he also asserts that he has known God, and comprehended the object and designs of the divine will, because he is in direct communion with him; while his disciples have perceived that he was the messenger of God, and have recognized his mission.

(V. 26.)—Jesus here declares that the knowledge of God, which he has given to his disciples and to men, was incomplete, for he promises to make them know him further. Jesus certainly gave men a knowledge of God, through his disciples, but an imperfect knowledge. He is still developing it more and more, in proportion to their purification and progress, that they may progressively attain to the perfection which Jesus has deserved by his works; and he himself will be in direct communion with them, when they are sufficiently purified to ascend to him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VERSES 1–27.

Arrest of Jesus.

(1) When Jesus had said these things, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kedron, where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. (2) And Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place, for Jesus often went there with his disciples. (3) Then Judas, taking the guard and officers from the Chief Priest and Pharisees, comes there with lamps and torches and weapons. (4) Then Jesus, knowing all things which were coming upon him, advanced and said to them, Whom seek ye? (5) They answered him, Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus says to them, I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, stood with

Digitized by Google

them. (6) Then, as he said to them, I am he, they went back, and fell to the ground. (7) Then he asked them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus the Nazarene. (8) Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he; therefore, if you seek me, let these go their way, (9) That the word might be fulfilled which said, I have lost none of those whom thou hast given me. (10) Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. And the servant's name was Malchus. (11) Then said Jesus to Peter, Put thy sword into the sheath. The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? (12) And the band and the captain and the officers of the Jews took Jesus with them. (13) And they bound him, and took him first to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. (14) And Caiaphas was he who had advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the nation. (15) And Simon Peter and the other disciple followed Jesus. And that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. (16) And Peter stood at the door without. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, and spoke to the door-keeper, and brought in Peter. (17) Then the maid who kept the door said to Peter, Are you not also one of this man's disciples? And he said, I am not. (18) And the servants and officers made a fire of charcoal, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves, and Peter stood and warmed himself with the others. (19) Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples, and about his doctrine. (20) Jesus answered him, I spoke openly to the world; I always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple, where the Jews were always assembled, and I have spoken nothing in secret; wherefore do you ask me? (21) Ask those who heard me, what I taught them; lo, these know what I have said! (22) And while he was saying this, one of the officers who stood by, struck Jesus a blow, saying, Dost thou answer the high priest thus? (23) Jesus answered him, If I have spoken ill, bear witness of the evil, but if I have spoken well, why do you strike me? (24) Annas sent him away bound to Caiaphas, the high priest. (25) And Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. Then they said to him, Are you not also one of his disciples? He denied, and said, I am not. (26) One of the servants of the high priest, who was a relative of him whose ear Peter had cut off, says, Did I not see you in the garden with him? (27) Peter denied again, and immediately a cock crew.

§ 56. The narrative of John is explained and completed by that of the three first Evangelists, and the variation in details is of no importance. We have already given you explanations relative to these events, and have only to call your attention to the answer of Jesus to the officer who struck him. His calm and dignified reply is a lesson to men, which they should always remember, like others which the Master has given them concerning the pardon of insults, injuries, and the most violent outrages. All the relations of men among themselves should be governed by reason,

Digitized by Google

wisdom, and reflection, which will lead to their practising justice and charity towards each other.

VERSES 28–40.

Jesus before Pilate.

(28) Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Prætorium; and it was early, and they did not go into the Prætorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. (29) Then Pilate came out to them, and said, What charge do you bring against this man? (30) They answered and said to him, If he had not been an evil-doer, we would not have handed him over to you. (31) Then Pilate said to them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. Then the Jews said to him, It is unlawful for us to put anyone to death. (32) That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spoke, signifying by what death he was about to die. (33) Then Pilate entered the Prætorium again, and spoke to Jesus, and said to him, Art thou the King of the Jews? (34) Jesus answered him, Do you say this of yourself, or have others spoken to you about me? (35) Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Your nation and the chief priests have given you up to me; what have you done? (36) Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be given over to the Jews, and my kingdom is not now from hence. (37) Then Pilate said to him, Art thou not a king, then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest, because I am a king. I was born for this, and I came into the world for this, that I might bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is from the truth hears my voice. (38) Pilate says to him, What is Truth? And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, I find no fault in him. (39) And it is a custom of yours that I should release some one to you at the Passover; do you wish me to release to you the King of the Jews? (40) Then they all cried out, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. And Barabbas was a robber.

§ 57. Here, as elsewhere, John's narrative ought not to be isolated from those of the other Evangelists. The basis of the events is the same; and you know that each narrator wrote within the limits traced out for him by inspirational medianimity, though preserving the independence of his nature. We have only to give you some special explanations, in addition to those already given.

In saying, "My kingdom is not of this world," Jesus asserts his spiritual mission, which is wholly apart from material instincts and aspirations. In saying, "My kingdom is not now from hence," he affirms that his kingdom will one day be of this world; but not until men are regenerated by truth, and abandon the devious paths which lead

Digitized by Google

them astray, to advance firmly in the path of progress, enlightened by Faith holding the torch of Truth.

In v. 37, Jesus bears witness to his royalty, and asserts the authority which he had already said he had received from the Father before the world was created; and he thus alludes to his spiritual position.

It is, in fact, because he is the king of your planet that he appeared on earth, to bear witness to the truth, both by testifying to the authority which he had received from the Father by sanctioning the truth of the past, and by giving men the truth relative to the time, and the necessities of the age, which was to be revealed in proportion as they were able to understand it.

"Whoever is from the Truth," said Jesus, "hears my voice; and Pilate said to him, "What is Truth?"

Refer to the explanations which we have already given as to the words, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (pp. 205, 206); and in those (§ 48, pp. 208–214), relating to the mission of the Spirit of Truth in the past, the present, and the future. You will there find the answer to Pilate's question, which Jesus passed over in silence, because men were not then able to receive and understand it.

He who is from the Truth knows that Truth is relative to the times, and to the necessities of the age; he knows that it is one; but more or less hidden, and it is only disclosed to the eyes of men so far as they are able to receive and understand it. He who is from the Truth knows that Truth is the knowledge of every principle in the physical, moral, and intellectual order, which leads humanity to perfection, to universal love and fraternity, and to its deliverance from matter, and to the developing of its sincere aspirations towards Spiritism and Spirituality. He who is of the Truth is he who devotes his faculties and efforts to the acquisition and diffusion of what he knows to be the Truth.

He who is thus of the Truth listens to the voice of Jesus, for Jesus is the Truth. His voice always makes itself heard among men, at all periods, by the Spirits of the Lord,

Digitized by Google

who are his messengers, and by missionary spirits, always superior to the masses, to whom they impart the Truth relative to the time, and the necessities of each period. At the time of his earthly mission, when he himself came to bear witness to the Truth, and subsequently, he made it known by his Apostles and his disciples, and afterwards by missionary spirits, whom you call men distinguished for their intelligence and virtue; the benevolent ġenii of humanity, either in the physical, moral, or intellectual order. The voice of Jesus is making itself heard again by the "Spirit of Truth," who comes to teach you all truth in proportion as you are able to understand it. And Jesus himself will come to show you the Truth without veil, at the time predicted, when the Messiahs or messengers have prepared the way for him, and when you shall have become capable and worthy of receiving his revelations.

CHAPTER XIX.

VERSES 1–7.

The Jews Demand the Crucifixion of Jesus.

(1) Then therefore Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him. (2) And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and put on him a purple robe. (3) And said, Hail, King of the Jews, and struck him blows. (4) Then Pilate came out again, and said to them, Behold I bring him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in him. (5) Then Jesus came out, wearing the thorny crown and the purple robe. And he saith to them, Behold the man. (6) When, therefore, the chief priests and officers saw him, and cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him, Pilate said to them, Take ye him and crucify him, for I find no fault in him. (7) The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself Son of God.

§ 58. These verses require no comment; and we have only to point to you that, according to the Jewish law, the blasphemer was liable to death by stoning; and the Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy, because they understood his words, "the Son of God," literally. We have often explained the real meaning of these words, which were not to be understood until the New Revelation should reveal the

Digitized by Google

origin and nature of the Master, and his spiritual position relative to God and to your planet.

VERSES 8–15.

Jesus questioned by Pilate.

(8) Then, when Pilate heard this saying, he was the more afraid, (9) And went into the Prætorium again, and said to Jesus, Whence art thou? And Jesus gave him no answer. (10) Then Pilate said to him, Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to crucify you, and power to let you go? (11) Jesus answered, You would have no authority over me at all, unless it were given you from above; therefore, he who delivered me to you has greater sin. (12) From this time Pilate tried to release him. But the Jews cried out, saying, If you release this man you are not a friend of Cæsar; everyone who makes himself a king speaks against Cæsar. (13) Therefore Pilate hearing this saying, brought out Jesus, and sat down on the judgment seat on a place called the Pavement, and in Hebrew, Gabbatha. (14) And it was the preparation of the Passover; and it was about the sixth hour, and he says to the Jews, Behold your King. (15) And they cried out, Away with him, away with him! Pilate says to them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.

§ 59. In this place it is only necessary to call your attention to the answer Jesus made to Pilate (verse 11). He alluded to the difference between the position of Pilate and that of Judas. Judas had desired to fulfil a mission, and had failed, while Pilate was incarnated in ignorance of the events which were to take place, and without having entered into any engagements. He had asked, before being incarnated, to occupy an important position; and the incarnation was chosen for him with that object. It is clear that Pilate would have had no power over Jesus unless it had been part of the conditions necessary for the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus. His power had been given him from above; for, if he occupied this important position, it had been assigned to him by the Lord; and the Master was in his power because the hour of the sacrifice had come. With a view to this sacrifice, the Master went of his own accord to the garden, where he permitted himself to be arrested, having previously testified that this arrest was one of the phases of his earthly mission, by exerting his power to throw down the guards.

Digitized by Google

VERSES 16–22.

The Crucifixion.

(16) Then he gave him over to them to be crucified. (17) And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he, bearing his cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, (18) Where they crucified him, and with him two others, one on one side, and one on the other, and Jesus in the middle. (19) And Pilate also wrote an inscription, and set it over the cross, and it was written, Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews. (20) Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. (21) Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, Do not write the King of the Jews, but that he said, I am King of the Jews. (22) Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

§ 60. We need only say here that Pilate's refusal to alter what he had written proceeded from his pride, which did not allow him to reconsider what he had decided upon, under the influence of unconscious inspiration.

VERSES 23–27.

The Garments of Jesus—His Charge to John.

(23) Then the soldiers who had crucified Jesus took his garments, and divided them into four parts, a part to each soldier, and the coat was left over. And the coat was seamless, woven from the top throughout. (24) Then they said to each other, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be; that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says, They parted my garments among them, and cast lots for my clothing. (25) Therefore the soldiers did this. And the mother of Jesus, and the sister of his mother, Mary, the wife of Klopas, and Mary Magdalene, were standing near the cross. (26) Then Jesus, seeing his mother, and the disciple whom he loved, standing by, said to his mother, Woman, behold thy son. (27) Then he said to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own house.

§ 61. The coat of Jesus was of human workmanship; but the peculiarity which attracted the notice of the soldiers proceeded from a magnetic-spiritual influence, which prevented them from seeing the seams of the material.

The act of Jesus in commending John to Mary and Mary to John is a last palpable assurance of his care for incarnate spirits, and a testimony to the feelings which should animate children towards their parents, and also draw the members of the great human family nearer by adoption.

Digitized by Google

VERSES 28–37.

Apparent Death of Jesus.

(28) After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst. (29) Then a vessel was set full of vinegar, and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and placed it on hyssop, and put it to his mouth. (30) Then, when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished, and bowed his head, and yielded up his spirit. (31) Then the Jews, that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (since it was the preparation; for that Sabbath was a great day) asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they should be removed. (32) Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of both those who were crucified with him. (33) But when they came to Jesus, and found that he was dead already, they did not break his legs. (34) But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. (35) And he who saw it bare testimony, and his testimony is true, and he knows that he speaks truth, that you should believe. (36) For these things happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. (37) And again, another Scripture says, They shall look on him whom they have pierced.

§ 62. The Scripture is a link which always binds together the past, the present, and the future, in the progressive and gradual teaching of the Truth relative to the necessities of each age. It was necessary that the words and actions of Jesus should permit men to believe in the humanity which was attributed to him, for this was the means of the acceptance and success of his earthly mission, and of the results which were to flow from it both at the time and in the future. Men were not able to bear or understand more, until the present period of the New Revelation.

The last words spoken by Jesus on the cross are explained in vol. ii. pp. 404–408.

The soldier who was ordered to break the legs of the criminals, was a secret admirer and believer in Jesus, and was unwilling to perform an outrage which the Romans and other ancient nations regarded as infamous. If it had been necessary, he would have been prevented from executing the order by a magnetic-spiritual influence, which would have inspired him with the desire to avoid a useless insult to a body which he supposed to be a corpse.

You are told that one of the soldiers pierced the side of Jesus with his lance, and there came out blood and water.

Digitized by Google

There is nothing surprising in this, if you remember his nature and origin. When Jesus appeared to men to die, he left his tangible fluidic body on the cross presenting every appearance of real death. The blood and water which flowed from it was a fluidic effect, corresponding to the material effect on a human body.

The words of Scripture, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced," have a general meaning. The idea is wholly spiritual. Men were to look upon the willing victim in thought. After the Resurrection his disciples were to see Jesus, and derive from his various appearances, and the traces of the sacrifice, the confirmation of their faith, and the power to spread it in spite of persecutions, and even in the face of death itself.

These words of Scripture were also words of the future, respecting the soldiers who had executed the sacrifice, and all others, who had been present, or had caused it to be executed. All these will behold the second advent of Jesus, at the time which he foretold; but so many incarnations will then have passed over them that the remembrance of the events, which would otherwise be so painful to them, will have been blotted out by reparation.

Do not suppose that those who crucified Jesus should be considered more guilty than those who condemned Socrates to drink the hemlock, or those who stoned the first martyrs. Crime is in proportion to the intelligence of the criminals; and although there were many among the Pharisees, the elders and the priests, who knowingly condemned the Just One to serve their base human interests, there were also many backward spirits, who merely swam with the current through ignorance.

Some of those who still discuss the death of Jesus under the veil of the letter, and are unable to explain his Resurrection, assert that the flow of blood and water proves that he did not really die on the cross.

All this is beside the mark, in view of the New Revelation concerning the nature and origin of Jesus; and the explanation which we have just given you is the only one on which men should fix their attention. If you are asked

Digitized by Google

this question, you may reply, from the human standpoint, that Jesus had just expired when the lance was driven into that part of his body which would retain most heat and vitality, owing to the position of the body and the kind of death. It is not surprising that blood, even had it been human blood, should still be sufficiently liquid to appear at the edges of the wound, separated from the aqueous portion by coagulation.

What would this supposition lead to, looked at from the point of view of those who urge it? Will they say that the body was alive when it was laid in the tomb, and that men might easily have removed the stone from the entrance? But from what motive could this fraud have been carried out, in which we must necessarily suppose Jesus himself to have been an accomplice? How could these unknown accomplices displace the stone, remove the body, and recall it to life, and escape the secret and active watchfulness of the chief priests, elders and Pharisees, who knew that the Resurrection had been foretold to take place on the third day; and they regarded it as an impossibility, which could only be the result of an imposture carried out by the removal of the body by human hands. How could these accomplices escape the open and secret vigilance which was to be exerted until the Sabbath was over, when the priests had sealed the stone, and stationed the Roman soldiers to guard the body, which was placed in the tomb under the seals?

Will those who, although they destroy the aureole around Jesus, yet regard him as a man superior in intelligence, and especially in the purity of his ideas, concede that he could, being a man, abandon the propaganda which he had undertaken, or else that he could have made himself the accomplice of a fraud?

And certainly a man like yourselves, a man of the people, uneducated, and subject to the weaknesses of humanity and the prejudices of his age, would have required not only great judgment and a very extended knowledge of men, but the knowledge or prescience of the future, to foresee the influence which his disappearance would exert on the cre-

Digitized by Google

dulity of the men of the period, and upon the morality of future generations.

After the stone had been removed, and the body of Jesus restored to life, how could those who carried it away preserve Jesus from the pursuit of his enemies? It would have required a very great confidence in those who had been his accomplices in the deception, to suppose that there would not have been a second Judas among them, who would have been able to obtain a very large reward from the chief priests, elders and Pharisees, if he could have asserted and proved that the body had been carried away by human hands; for we cannot suppose that pure and virtuous men would have been guilty of such a deception; any more than Jesus himself, the divine model of virtue in purity and example, who would then have crowned his superior mission, and his pure and spotless life, by a fraud.

But we have already shown you (vol. ii. §§ 303, 304, pp. 414–416, 425–434) that the body was in the tomb when the chief priests and Pharisees came to seal the stone, with the Roman soldiers who were appointed to guard it. We have shown you that the disappearance of the body from the tomb is impossible, and inexplicable as a "Resurrection," in the real sense of the word, but is according to the laws of nature, as revealed by the revelation now sent you from God, though many reject the Gospel narrative and events, spiritual light and science, and the new revelation. Say to those who seek to destroy what they cannot replace, "poor blind creatures, you had an imperfect light, which prepared you for the brightness of day, but you seek to extinguish it, and plunge yourselves into darkness." Poor blind creatures who stumble over the stones which you detach from the edifice which has been shaken by time, and has become insufficient (for the letter now kills, and the hour has come for the advent of the Spirit which giveth life), you do not perceive that, by neglecting to give them their proper place in the erection of the new building, you are building a tomb for yourselves, where you will be enveloped in darkness. Abandon your folly, and open your eyes. You, who believe

Digitized by Google

yourselves to be dupes of the past, deny the future, and break what you now possess; and what will you do then?

VERSES 38–42.

Burial of Jesus.

(38) And after these things, Joseph of Arimathæa, who was a disciple of Jesus, asked Pilate (but secretly, for fear of the Jews) that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate consented. Then he went and took the body of Jesus. (39) And Nicodemus also, who at first came to Jesus by night, came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes of about a hundred pounds weight. (40) Then they took the body of Jesus, and wrapped it in linen clothes with the spices, as it is the custom of the Jews to bury. (41) And there was a garden at the place where he was crucified, and a new tomb in the garden, in which no man had been yet laid. (42) Therefore they placed Jesus there, because it was the Jews' preparation day; for the tomb was near at hand.

§ 63. These circumstances require no commentary, and the narratives of John, and of the three first Evangelists, explain and complete each other.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSES 1–18.

Mary Magdalene at the Tomb.

(1) And on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene comes early, while it was still dark, to the tomb, and sees the stone taken away from the tomb. (2) Then she runs, and comes to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and says to them, They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him. (3) Then Peter and the other disciple went out, and came to the tomb. (4) And the two ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb. (5) And stooping down, he sees the linen clothes lying, yet he did not go in. (6) Then comes Simon Peter, following him, and went into the tomb, and sees the linen clothes lying. (7) And the napkin which was about his head was not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped up in a place separately. (8) Then the other disciple, who came first to the tomb, went in also, and saw and believed. (9) For they did not yet know the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. (10) Then the disciples returned home again. (11) But Mary stood outside the tomb, weeping. Then, as she wept, she stooped down into the tomb, (12) And sees two angels in white, sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. (13) And they say to her, Woman, why weepest thou? She says to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. (14) And as she was saying these things, she

Digitized by Google

turned round, and sees Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. (15) Jesus says to her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, thinking that it was the gardener, says to him, Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away. (16) Jesus says to her, Mary. She, turning round, says to him, Rabboni, which is to say, Teacher. (17) Jesus says to her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and to your Father, and to my God and your God. (18) Mary Magdalene comes to announce to the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and he had said these things to her.

§ 64. We have already given you all the explanations necessary concerning these verses, by co-ordinating John's narrative with that of the other Evangelists (vol. ii. § 304, pp. 417–425).

VERSES 19–23.

Appearance of Jesus to the Apostles.

(19) Then, when it was evening on that day, which was the first day of the week, and the doors were closed where the disciples were assembled, through fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and says to them, Peace be with you. (20) And saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. Therefore the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. (21) Then Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. (22) And saying this, he breathed on them, and said, Receive the Holy Spirit. (23) Whosesoever sins you remit, they shall be remitted to them; and if you retain the sins of any, they shall be retained.

§ 65. Several of these circumstances have already been explained to you (vol. ii. § 306, pp. 427–439).

(V. 21.)—Jesus expresses the following idea in these words: "My Father has entrusted me with a mission, which I have accomplished; and I have given you a mission, which you are about to accomplish."

"Having said this, he breathed on them, and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" Humanly speaking, he gave them a visible sign of his influence, and in reality he communicated inspiration to them by giving them the invisible support of the superior spirits, who were to assist them in their mission. After this he promised (as explained in the commentary on the three first Gospels) "to send them the gift of the Father;" that is, the manifestation of the superior spirits, under the visible form of tongues of fire.

Digitized by Google

Verse 23 (the meaning of which, in spirit and in truth, is given at vol. i. pp. 316–318; vol. ii. pp. 111–123, 127, 128, &c.) was addressed specially and personally to the disciples, who, being animated by an enlightened zeal, and aided and inspired by the spirits of the Lord, possessed the power to bind and to loose, and to remit or retain sins, in the sense that they were able to judge of the purity or culpability of those who sought their advice, and consequently their judgment was just. But none of them ever claimed the right to judge without appeal, and to absolve and condemn.

VERSES 24–31.

Jesus and Thomas.

(24) But Thomas, one of the twelve, who was called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. (25) Then the other disciples said to him, We have seen the Lord. And he said to them, Unless I see in his hands the place of the nails, and thrust my finger into the place of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. (26) And after eight days his disciples were again indoors, and Thomas with them. Jesus comes, while the doors were closed, and stood in the middle, and said, Peace be with you. (27) Then he says to Thomas, Put your finger here, and see my hands, and put out your hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not incredulous, but believing. (28) And Thomas answered, and said to him, My Lord and my God. (29) Jesus said to him, Thomas, you have believed because you have seen me; blessed are those who have not seen me, and have believed. (30) Then Jesus also wrought many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. (31) But these things were written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that you might believe, and have life in his name.

§ 66. Thomas, like the other disciples, knew nothing of the causes and effects of tangibility. He was convinced, when he saw the Master appear in the midst of the disciples while the door was closed, to give him the proofs he had demanded before he would believe that his fellow-Apostles had seen Jesus, and that the Resurrection had really taken place.

There is a redundancy in the exclamation of Thomas, "My Lord and my God." The two expressions have the same signification, and express the reverence and admiration which he felt at beholding his Master "risen again;" and his thoughts reverted to God, who could alone have

Digitized by Google

wrought such a miracle. From this moment the idea of the Divinity of Jesus arose in the minds of all the disciples, as well as of Thomas and the other Apostles. Men could not explain the extraordinary, and apparently miraculous, events which took place before their eyes, by any known agency; and afterwards ascribed power to Jesus which could only be ascribed to God, and therefore attributed divinity to him.

You should refer to what we have said already (vol. iii. § 1) concerning the divinity which was ascribed to the Master, and the spiritual and extra-human nature and origin of Jesus, and his relations to God and to your planet. This knowledge, which you derive from the present revelation, will explain all the phenomena which are called miracles.

The words of Jesus to Thomas (v. 29) applied to the men of that age, who, without needing the proofs which the incredulity of Thomas led him to demand, or without having seen the appearance of the Master, like the Apostles, believed in the Resurrection simply on the strength of the words pronounced by the Master, and the acts which he performed among men, added to the testimony of those who had beheld him "risen again." They were designed to make men understand the faith which ought to be placed in the testimony of the Apostles who asserted the truth of the Resurrection. This faith was to be blind until the eyes of men were capable of opening to the light radiating from the New Revelation.

These words are peculiarly applicable to the new era, in which faith and science, enlightened by reason, must support each other. Enlightened Faith is not to be obtained solely by what the eyes of the body can perceive materially, but by what the eyes of the spirit can perceive by the profound study and examination, both theoretical and experimental, of Spiritism, which consists, as one of the laws of Nature, in the communication between the spiritual and corporeal worlds. In the providential and divine order of the world, it is the mode by which God transmits spiritual

Digitized by Google

science, the secrets of the Hereafter, and light and truth to men, by means of successive and progressive revelations in the present and the future, as well as in the past. This study and examination should be conducted with reverence and love towards the Creator, without bias or preconceived ideas, but with that humility, disinterestedness, morality, and experience which man should acquire; and with no other motive but love for humanity, and the ardent desire of personal and collective progress by light, knowledge, and truth.

We have just said that Faith and Science ought to support one another. Science is inseparable from Faith, and is not limited to your human science, which is exerted solely on matter and fluids from a material point of view; but it extends to the pursuit of truth in the physical, moral, and intellectual order, from the point of view of spiritual progress. Thus, it extends to the comprehension, in spirit and in truth, of the words and actions of the Master, and of his promises in the Messianic revelation, which the Apostles and the Evangelists were commissioned to diffuse among men, and to transmit to future generations. This includes the principle and source of all human purification and progress. Here are the means by which men can raise themselves, and through which they may see the veils which still envelop the Truth rent away little by little. Science extends to the study and knowledge of the laws of Nature which govern both the visible and invisible worlds, and the relations between them; and to the knowledge which men ought to acquire of their future destinies, and what they should hope for. It extends to the study of the physical and moral laws of the world and its creatures; their origin, their phases, the goal which is set before them, and the conditions necessary to be fulfilled to attain the end. It extends to the study and knowledge of magnetic and spiritual science, which are designed to lead men to advance in the paths of progress and truth; for they will now be enlightened by the Spirit of Truth, holding the torch of Truth in his hands, and guiding them in their researches by messengers of the Lord incarnated on missions, to develop

Digitized by Google

belief, quicken progress, or communicate new discoveries in the spiritual, material, and fluidic order.

In conclusion, we will point out to you that John states that he has not related everything in his narrative (thus alluding to the other three Gospels); but that what he wrote was designed to establish the faith of men in the mission of Jesus as the Christ, the predicted and promised Messiah, and as the Son of God, by his purity and power; in order that men might walk in the path which he traced out by his morality, teachings, and examples, in order to attain to the permanent life of the spirit, which perfection alone can give them, by freeing them from matter and its influences.

CHAPTER XXI.

VERSES 1–25.

Jesus at the Lake of Tiberias.

(1) After these things, Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the Lake of Tiberias, and he showed himself thus. (2) Simon Peter and Thomas, who is called Didymus, and Nathanael, from Cana of Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples, were together. (3) Simon Peter says to them, I am going to fish. They say to him, We are coming with you, too. They went out, and went into the boat immediately, and on that night they caught nothing. (4) But when morning was already come, Jesus stood on the shore; however, the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. (5) Then Jesus says to them, Little children, have you not caught anything? They answered him, No. (6) And he said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you shall find. Then they cast it, and were not strong enough to draw it up again for the multitude of fishes. (7) Then that disciple whom Jesus loved, said to Peter, It is the Lord. Then Simon Peter, hearing that it was the Lord, girt on his overcoat, for he was naked, and cast himself into the lake. (8) And the other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits, dragging the net of fishes. (9) Then, when they landed on the shore, they see a charcoal fire made, and fish laid upon it, and bread. (10) Jesus says to them, Fetch some of the fish which you have just caught. (11) Simon Peter went and drew the net upon shore, full of large fishes, a hundred and fifty-three, and although there were so many, the net was not broken. (12) Jesus says to them, Come and breakfast. And none of the disciples dared to ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. (13) Then Jesus comes and takes the bread and gives it to them, and the fish likewise. (14) This is already the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after he was risen from the dead. (15) Then, when they had breakfasted, Jesus says to Simon Peter, Simon Jona, lovest thou me more than these? He says to him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He says,

Digitized by Google

to him, Feed my lambs. (16) Again, a second time he says to him, Simon Jona, dost thou love me? He says to him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He says to him, Feed my sheep. (17) He says to him the third time, Simon Jona, dost thou love me? Peter was grieved that he said to him the third time, Lovest thou me? and said to him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus says to him, Feed my sheep. (18) Verily, verily, I say to thee, When thou wert young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst where thou wouldst, but when thou art old, thou shalt stretch out thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee where thou dost not desire. (19) And he said this, signifying by what kind of death he should glorify God. And after saying this, he says to him, Follow me. (20) And Peter, turning round, sees the disciple following whom Jesus loved, and who leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, who is it who betrayeth thee? (21) Peter, seeing him, says to Jesus, Lord, what about this man? (22) Jesus says to him, If I wish him to abide till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. (23) Then the report got abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he should not die, but, If I wish him to remain till I come, what is that to thee? (24) This is that disciple who testifies to these things, and writes these things, and we know that his testimony is true. (25) And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were written in detail, I think that even the world itself would not contain the books which would be written. Amen.

§ 67. The facts related in this chapter were derived from the Apostle John, like everything included in his Gospel. Verse 24 should read: "It is the same disciple who bears witness to these things, and who has *dictated** this, and we know that his testimony is true." The events recorded in this chapter were related by the Apostle John to his disciples, when his age rendered him unable to write himself, and one of them wrote according to his dictation; and therefore this chapter is properly placed at the end of his Gospel, as forming part of it.

The presence of Jesus after his Resurrection made a deep impression upon the disciples; and his various appearances to them and to the women, were designed, in their totality, to be useful in the present and future, until your own days; and to prepare for the future revelation of the Spirit of Truth.

Therefore, Jesus again manifested himself to the disciples under a human appearance, which did not permit them to recognize him at once.

* The context renders this interpretation highly probable; and although the original will not bear the meaning "dictate," it may be translated "record."—TRANS.

Digitized by Google

After the net was cast, according to his directions, and they could not draw it up again for the weight, John, who could not attribute this "miraculous" event to any one but Jesus, said to Peter, "It is the Lord;" and the thought which John expressed prevailed in the minds of all the disciples.

It was at the moment that Jesus took the bread and fish, and handed it to them, that he presented the figure of the Master, and they recognized him; and after they had breakfasted, they heard his well-known voice speaking to Peter.

You can perceive that such a manifestation excludes the idea of a resurrection with a material body like yours. The explanations which you have already received respecting his appearance to the disciples on the road to Emmaus are likewise applicable here; and spiritual science enables you to understand all these phenomena.

The "miraculous" draught of fishes was a natural phenomenon, like the previous event, which we have already explained (vol. i. pp. 178–181).

Jesus, in speaking to Peter (verses 15–17), assigned him his share in the labours of the first days of Christianity; but he spoke to Peter personally, and not to those who erected his mission into a successive government. (Here you may refer to the explanation of Christ's former words to Peter (vol. ii. pp. 112–117.)

Jesus foretold to Peter his martyrdom, and the kind of death which awaited him, by the veiled words, "Follow me." Peter was to follow Jesus, for he was to be crucified. The answer to Peter's question (verses 20–23) was taken literally and materially, and gave rise to the idea that John was not to die until the return of the Master, at the predicted time of the "end of the world." The words of Jesus were designedly veiled and evasive, but were intended to intimate that every one has enough to do to keep guard over his own actions, and to prepare himself for his own end as much as he can, without seeking to read the future destiny of any other man. The future fate of each of the Apostles was to remain hidden from them. Hence, the evasive character of the answer of Jesus to Peter, which was designed, under the

Digitized by Google

veil of the letter, to predict to Peter the fate which awaited him, and also to convey a general lesson to men, as well as to Peter himself.

The last verse (v. 25) was only an exaggerated expression which John employed in the presence of his disciples, to express the greatness of the works of Jesus.

END OF PART II.

Digitized by Google

PART III.

COMMENTARY ON THE DECALOGUE.

You know that God does not communicate with men directly. The Jews supposed that it was God himself who talked with Moses, as it was needful that they should. Moses was an elevated spirit, relatively to the Hebrews whom he led; and he was a seeing, hearing, inspirational, or physical medium, according to the circumstances and necessities of his mission. In order to give force and authority to the commandments which were imposed on the Hebrews, and to fix in their memories and hearts the laws and ordinances which were indispensable to them at that period, he was forced to surround his laws with all needful pomp and mystery, and to employ formulas capable of overawing the men who listened to him.

Under the guidance of spirits superior to himself, he foresaw certain coming events, and possessed capacities unknown to the multitude. That is, he understood the spiritual power of man, and the manner in which it must be developed. A medium can only act under certain fluidic conditions; and Moses was aware of these conditions, and foresaw the effect which they would have in the eyes of the Hebrews, firstly, as regards himself, and then as regards others. But if he had said to the Hebrews, "Moses tells you; Moses commands you; Moses teaches you;" he would only have been laughed at.

It was, therefore, to make a strong and durable impression on men, who could only be led for a long time to come by terror, and to compel them to respect the law which was

Digitized by Google

given them, that the powerful manifestation took place on Mount Sinai, which accompanied the promulgation of the Decalogue. You can comprehend this manifestation by what you know of the effects produced in all ages, and even among yourselves.

Everything which is related of it, like all other physical manifestations recorded in the Old Testament, whether material or intelligent, was the work of spirits appointed to produce these effects. The sounds were produced by the collision of inflammable fluids, which presented the appearance of a blazing fire exhaling a fiery vapour. Thus were produced the physical effects of thunder and lightning, and the thick cloud which covered the mountain, which sent up a smoke like that of a furnace (Ex. xix. 16–19; xx. 18). The spirits also, by the use of sonorous fluids, produced the physical effect of the trumpet which sounded long, and waxed louder and louder.

The Hebrews were forbidden to pass the barrier on account of the danger which might arise from the bursting of the columus of fluids which were piled upon the mountain, and which would have led to accidents similar to those caused by lightning. The people said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." They alluded to the sound of thunder, which the assembled multitude regarded as the voice of God himself.

The spirits produced the thick darkness by the combination of opaque fluids; and in this (to use the Biblical expression (Ex. xx. 22) "God was." This was where the superior spirit, his messenger, was; and where Moses, after the promulgation of the Decalogue, was to receive the special laws and ordinances which were necessary for the Hebrews at that time.

The first tables of the Law, which God foresaw would be broken, were written by the medianimity of Moses, under mechanical and clairaudient spiritual influence. Thus, they were the work of God, by the intermediate agency of the superior spirit, who was his messenger, and who, being himself invisible to Moses, caused him to hear the words of

Digitized by Google

the commandments, and, at the same time, made him write them down mechanically, as emanating (so it appeared to Moses) from God himself.

The second tables were mechanically written by Moses, under the inspiration of the superior spirit, but under unconscious inspiration, so that it appeared to him that he had written them from memory; and he delivered them to the Hebrews engraved, as he had remembered them. But if he had told the people, "I have remembered the words written on the first tables and have transcribed them," they would have thrown doubt on their source, and despised the Law. He was therefore inspired by the superior spirits who aided him in his mission, to present the second tables, like the first, as actually (to use the Biblical expression) "written by the finger of God,"—for Moses believed himself to be in direct communication with the Lord—upon Mount Sinai.

Read attentively what is related to you in Oriental language, appropriate to the time and people relative to the promulgation of the Decalogue (Ex. xix.–xxxi). Read what took place when Moses, having received the two tables of the Law, descended from Mount Sinai, after the superior spirit had informed him of the idolatrous proceedings which were being carried on at the camp (Ex. xxxii.), and what took place from the time when Moses broke the first tables at the foot of the mountain, until he again descended from Sinai bringing the new tables of the Law (xxxiii., xxxiv.) If you compare the narrative with what you are told of the events which attended the promulgation of the Decalogue, and those preparatory to the commencement of the public mission of Moses (Ex. ii.–xix.), as well as with the events which followed (Ex. xxxv.–xl.), you will understand the necessity for leading this backward and intractable nation by terror, and subjecting them to the direction of God's messenger. They were deeply imbued with prejudices and tendencies to idolatry; and it was necessary to lead them to Monotheism, and thus to prepare for the advent of the Messiah. You will understand the necessity of apparently placing the

Digitized by Google

Hebrews, by the mediation of their chief, in direct contact with their God, who described himself, by his own hand, as the only God; the Lord of all the gods; strong and jealous, executing vengeance on those who disobeyed his law, and visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate him, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments. (We will explain the true sense of the last words presently.)

There is one event which we must not pass over in silence, and which those who cannot understand its necessity and object regard as a crime. This is the massacre which Moses ordered in the camp, and which, at a later period, and under the rule of the pure and gentle law of love and charity, which Christ came to give to men, was turned into a weapon and an example by ignorance, fanaticism, and ambition. It is related, as follows:—(Ex. xxxii. 25–28.)

> And when Moses saw that the people were naked (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies); then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, Who is on the Lord's side, let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses, and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord; even every man upon his son and upon his brother, that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

At the time of the incarnation of that generation, the spirits who had assumed bodies were perhaps even more mingled than at your own day. Most of them had undertaken a mission to uphold on earth, and to popularize the idea of the unity of God; but many who felt that they might be too weak to persevere, desired to be arrested in the course of their earthly existence, in case they might fail in their engagements.

You are aware that every spirit, and especially every inferior spirit, retains, for a longer or shorter period, in the

Digitized by Google

errant state, the prejudices and tendencies of his preceding incarnation; and when he is ready for new trials, he has always to dread their return during his new earthly existence, when he has to struggle against them. Thus, you often behold young people, and even infants, among yourselves, exhibiting evil or vicious passions, even among pure surroundings. Sometimes these spirits have asked to be arrested in the course of their earthly existence, in case they should fail in their engagements, and they are then stayed in their course that they may acquire the degree of strength which is still wanting to them, by reflection and study in the errant state. This class of spirits is less guilty, for they sin by weakness rather than by their own will; and under these circumstances, the premature death which they have desired aids in their development and advancement.

At the time of that incarnation, there were also a class of spirits who had to expiate murders (and how many were committed in that rude age!), and who had asked to suffer this expiation, and thus to find purification, reparation, and progress in the law of retaliation.

Those who fell under the blows of of the Levites suffered a fate which they had foreseen and demanded; for some belonged to the class of spirits who had undertaken a mission to maintain and popularize on earth the idea of the unity of God, and had asked to be checked in the course of their earthly existence in case they should fail in their engagements; and others belonged to the class of spirits who had committed murders,and had asked to suffer this expiation.

This was the case, and no stroke was misdirected; for under such circumstances the protecting spirits who watched over the trials and expiations of each, guided the culprit, or directed the sword which should strike him, just as the bullet which is to strike such and such a man follows its course, when the probability sometimes is that it would be wasted. The spirits acted by spiritual magnetism on the culprit, or by inspiration and fluidic action on the swordsman; and you may thus truly say, "Man proposes and God disposes."

Digitized by Google

Nothing takes place without its appropriate end and object; for what man often regards as an arbitrary dispensation, is never anything but the consequences of the past, or the preparation for the future. The motive and object of the massacre which Moses commanded in the name of the Lord, was not to cause victims to be slaughtered at random (for those who perished suffered a fate which they had foreseen and demanded), but to arrest their earthly existence, according to the conditions of their trials or expiations. On the other hand, it was designed to impose absolute submission to the divine will and its commandments and precepts, by the agency of terror, on these backward and intractable men, always inclined to idolatry and rebellion, and always ready to forget and disobey their God. It was designed to subject them to the authority of his messenger, to teach them the necessity of submission, and to lead them to walk in the paths which their chief had marked out for them, and thus to fulfil the task which was providentially assigned to them in the course of human progress.

Thus, Moses was a human instrument, who acted under the inspirations of the spirits of the Lord, to cut short the trials of those who had failed, to accomplish the expiations of others, and also to prepare for the future; for every age has its own manners and necessities.

Do not judge from your own point of view, nor according to your own age; but look upon the events relatively to the Hebrews, with regard to the age, the men, their prejudices and opinions, and the conditions which were indispensable for the work which was to be accomplished at that time and in the future. Have you not, since these barbarous ages, and at periods when civilization and intelligence were much more developed in the human order, decimated men, when a revolt has arisen, to maintain discipline in an army, and to enforce submission to its leaders? And in the religious order, have not massacres taken place often, far too often, in the name of God? Remember the frequent instances recorded in the history of your humanity; remember the religious wars, the autos-da-fé, and the mas-

Digitized by Google

sacre of St. Bartholomew. Have not the priests of religion always urged men, during religious wars, under the influence of ignorance, fanacticism, and the abuse of power and ambition, to kill one another to consecrate themselves to the Lord, and draw down his blessings upon them; and have they not sacrificed men in the autos-da-fé for the honour of their God, and to acquire his favour? And who were the instigators of the massacre of St. Bartholomew? The priests, the servants of God! What was the ruling motive of the religious wars? Ambition! Ambition, not to be great in the eyes of God, but the ambition of maintaining power.

In these phases of the history of the past, we make no exception with respect to religious massacres and wars in favour of the Protestant priests, who have excited their flocks against the Catholics, and who also slew their enemies. Some, like the Levites of Moses, slew to prove that they were the children of God. Others, to acquire the power, which the Catholics feared would be taken from them. And there was no longer then, as in the time of the Hebrews, a messenger of God, like Moses, at the foot of Mount Sinai, speaking in the name of the Lord. No; the necessity which directed the act of Moses existed no longer, and the massacres, the religious wars, the autos-da-fé, and St. Bartholomew, were the human work of ignorance, fanaticism, and the abuse of power and authority, making a weapon and example of the massacre accomplished by the order of Moses. And why did these religious wars and massacres take place? Because the Churchman would not understand that his mission is not to stop those who are entrusted to his care, and to make them turn back, but rather to urge them forward on the path of progress.

But although the guilty instigators of these atrocities would have to suffer a long and painful expiation, yet those who perished, were not lost victims, any more than those who fell under the blows of the Levites in the camp of the Israelites. Those who perished, suffered a fate which they had foreseen and demanded; for even with respect to the

Digitized by Google

instant of the death of his creatures, God leaves nothing to what you call chance, in your ignorance of both causes and effects.*

We are now about to give you the explanation of the Decalogue in spirit and in truth. This explanation is not relative, or restricted to the Hebrews or Christians, but is general, and applicable to all ages and nations. We will begin, as follows:

God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

God, the Creator of everything which exists, has caused the spirit to emerge from *nothingness* (we will immediately explain the sense in which you should understand this word, which is derived from your human language); to give it being, thought and personality. It is by his Almighty Will that man has risen from the depths of matter to attempt his first steps on the spiritual path. Again, it is the Lord who has shown him the road which leads him from the bondage of sin and matter, by enlightening his path with the torch of Truth. Nations of the earth! raise your eyes to the "pillar of fire," which is to guide your path from slavery to the land of liberty. It goes before you, and the "Spirit of Truth" has raised the beacon on which you should fix your eyes. Advance, without faltering or hesitation, for you must succeed in reaching the "promised land, flowing with milk and honey;" the word of peace and the love of God.

MOSES, ELIJAH, JOHN,† MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN.

With the sanction of the Apostles.

* Consult what is said respecting the moment of death in the explanation of the Fifth Commandment.

† It has been revealed in the commentary on the three first Gospels, that it was one and the same spirit who assumed three earthly individualities, and accomplished three separate missions, as Moses, Elijah, and John the Baptist.

Digitized by Google

In speaking of the spirit, we have said that God has derived it from nothingness, to give it being, thought, and personality. But nothingness, in the human acceptation which you attach to the word, is nonsense, from the point of view which correlates God and the creation. Nothingness, to the spirit, is spiritually the ignorance of its existence. Thus, the spiritual principle contained in minerals and vegetables is nothingness, with regard to its being. The annihilation of matter, properly speaking, is the volatilization of the material principles which must combine to produce either planets or your bodies. It is, therefore, said that God created the world out of nothing, or of chaos, because he formed it from a mass of molecules scattered through space.

First Commandment.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Jehovah is the one only God, the Uncreated Creator; He who Is; of whom, by whom, and in whom everything exists. Therefore, let not man turn his thoughts from the Creator to the creature, and render it a worship and an honour which belong only to the Lord; not because he is a jealous God, but because man is a feeble spirit, easily turned aside from the right path, and entering it with difficulty.

Second Commandment.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

The unity of God is the fundamental principle of Faith, and should have been preserved by theologians. We speak of it from the origin of religion, for all those who were at the head of religion held this doctrine firmly, although they spread another belief among the people. The idea of the unity of God has been perpetuated in all ages, and among all nations, although it did not remain general, but became

Digitized by Google

the heritage of spirits who were intellectually more advanced, though often less virtuous than the nations whom they governed, either as priests or as philosophers.

The prohibition to make any resemblance to created beings implies no obligation to abstain from such reproductions, but only forbids men to bow down to them and worship them, in order always to preserve the unity of the creative principle. But material men needed material representations to nourish their faith. Hence, the adoration offered to what were originally only unimportant representations—that is, images placed in the temples as ornaments. Remember the Temple of Solomon, in which angels were placed at the four corners of the altar, with their wings extended, some turned towards the East, and some towards the West. Symbolical and artistic representations were not forbidden, but only the worship of such representations.

On this occasion Moses represents God to the Hebrews as a powerful and jealous God, permitting none to share in his rights, and able to make them respected; but not by striking the innocent, to punish the guilty, unto the third and fourth generation; nor by shewing mercy to thousands of the guilty out of favour to one just man who had compounded for his posterity. How feeble is human intelligence!

Both the punishment and the mercy are monstrous, if taken literally; but, according to the Spirit, they contain a sublime expression of the infinite justice and mercy of God. You will find their justification and explanation from both points of view, in the principle of reincarnation, which shews you punishment hanging over the guilty spirit from one generation to another, and the mercy which is extended from one generation to generation over the spirit who purifies himself, and progresses in well-doing.

Spirits generally assemble in similar classes, and it is intelligible that guilty parents should attract little-advanced spirits who are disposed to follow the same courses, just as those who observe the laws of the Lord, and whose posterity should be more and more virtuous, attract more and more advanced spirits from generation to generation.

Digitized by Google

To explain little-advanced spirits seeking vicious parents, you know that there are spirits who have little desire of progress, and seek the sympathetic bonds, whether good or evil, which they have already borne. Others, though incited by the desire of progress, select surroundings the evil influences of which they are unable to overcome; but in such a case the spirit is warned beforehand of the risk he runs in incarnating himself, and the almost inevitable fall which will be the result; and if he persists, it is of his own free will.

You can understand the progress of judgment and mercy upon these principles. The punishment extends to the third and fourth generations, because the spirits gradually purify themselves, either by incarnating themselves under similar conditions, or by the guilty recommencing their trials. As soon as the spirit improves, and enters on the path of progress, he attracts to himself companions who are also more advanced, and thus, for thousands of generations and more the improvement makes itself felt, to culminate in final perfection.

Third Commandment.[1]

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain.

This commandment has generally been misunderstood. It is connected with the two first, and follows naturally from them.

As man should never lose sight of the unity of God, or bow down to worship any image, he ought not to give the title of God, or attribute his power, to any creature or representation. Furthermore, man ought not to abuse the name of the Lord, if he regards it with any serious thought; and the injunction of Jesus not to swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool, applies still more forcibly to the Creator of all things. Strive, therefore, to banish from your language oaths made "before God" and "in the face of heaven," and all other exaggerated formulæ which often hide, even from him

Digitized by Google

who uses them, how little confidence he has in himself. Always strive to raise your thoughts towards the Lord when you invoke his name; for to do so on trifling or guilty occasions is to abuse it. When the name of God is invoked in heartfelt sincerity, it attracts, not the presence of God towards you, for your planet is still too far from the point which it must attain for that; but the support of the superior and good spirits whom the Father has appointed governors of his children, and who communicate his wishes to them, until purification and progress have so far developed their intelligence that they no longer need intermediaries.

Fourth Commandment.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son nor thy daughter, thy manservant nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.

This commandment, which was invested with religious authority, is an exclusively civil law of humanitarian necessity, which required to be enforced upon the Hebrews to overcome their tendency to the abuse of power. Work is a necessary law of humanity, for it is by work that man progresses, acquires, or repairs, but rest is not less indispensable for the body and the spirit. Would it have sufficed to say to the primitive men, "Leave your body time to recover its strength, and leave your spirit leisure to free itself from material cares, that it may rise towards its Creator, and turn away from the earth, where it is held captive, to rise by hope and meditation towards the exalted spheres which await it." Alas, would it be sufficient even now!

There was a profound feeling of philanthropy in this commandment, which men have failed to appreciate. All the ancient nations abused their power, and had slaves who were forced to undertake the severest labours. Was it not necessary to assure them a needful respite by making it incumbent on their masters? Animals were despised as possessing neither soul nor thought, and were looked upon

Digitized by Google

as things with scarcely the sensation of pain; and without this command, they would have been overwhelmed with fatigue. The stock would have become exhausted, and degeneration would finally have exterminated those most useful to men.

Even the stranger, who ought to be respected as a guest, would have been liable, if not included in the command, to be loaded with all the labours on the Sabbath Day, from which the faithful were required to abstain; and the holy law of hospitality, which was generally respected among the ancients, would have been violated. Remember that under all religions, rest is the preservative of health.

At the present day, we tell you, work with zeal and courage, but never overpass the limits of your strength. Respect the Sabbath, and cause it to be respected, not in a trifling but in a reasonable manner. Whether you require rest on one day or another, take it whenever you feel real need of it; and above all, never overwork one of your inferiors, and also respect the repose of the beast. The Hebrews carried their observance of the Sabbath so far that even the earth rested, not on the seventh day, but on the seventh year. This custom, which appears childish to modern agriculturists, was not without sufficient reason. Men were less numerous, and their requirements were also less. While enjoying the luxury of repose, they permitted the earth to recover its natural fertility without resorting to artificial means, the abuse of which leads to various diseases which afflict you, without your being aware of the real causes. The flocks were pastured on the fallow lands, and their presence was sufficient to restore those salts to the earth which are needed for the reproduction of plants. But this is beside the questions before you.

We repeat with Jesus, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Never forget these words of the Master, and endeavour to practise them in spirit and in truth, as they have been explained to you in the Commentary on the Gospels (vol. ii. pp. 1–8).

The fourth commandment concludes, "For in six days

Digitized by Google

the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it." These words are a comment added by Moses to the law to give it more authority and importance in the eyes of men. They are explanations given to make the people understand the necessity of repose, since God required it himself. The people were little advanced, and Moses addressed them in language which they could understand; and although he was versed in the Egyptian sciences and mysteries, he was ignorant of many things, in his incarnate state, which the study of ages has since unfolded.

Can we reconcile what Moses says of God and the creation with what is now known both by human science and by spiritual revelation and science?

It is useless to attempt it. When Moses thus interpreted the commandment, and gave it such high authority, he had no other intention than to engrave a deeper respect for it in the hearts of the Hebrews. He divided the Creation into six epochs, and not days; not as the result of scientific researches, but with a similar object. The command was appropriate to the necessities of humanity; it protected the weak, by ensuring them a rest on the seventh day; and Moses compelled the strong to submit to it.

Is every explanation impossible, which might reconcile the six periods with the actual results of human science, in order to satisfy both scientific men and priests?

It is practically impossible, for Science herself has not spoken the last word. Science cannot yet estimate the cataclysms which have effected the transformations of your planet, especially as they have been partial, and have often carried the elements of production from one point to another. You have not yet witnessed the last, for several, at first partial, and then general, must still overturn the existing order of things, to destroy the material principle, and bring your planet, not merely to the fluidic point, but to the state of fluids purified from all material molecules.

Digitized by Google

Fifth Commandment.

Honour thy father and thy mother.

Let him who desires to obey the commandments of the Lord comprehend them in all their grandeur. Honour thy father and thy mother! They are the chiefs whom the Lord hath given thee, and the (incarnate) guides whom he has appointed to guard thee; but are not those entrusted with thy education, who develop thy intelligence and watch over thy youth, are they not also thy father and mother *spiritually?* And do they not sometimes do more than the father and mother according to the flesh, who sometimes forget their sacred duties, and abandon the child whom the Lord has entrusted to their care, to its evil propensities, and often even lead it to follow their own, by setting it the example of pride, selfishness, luxury, and the vices and evil passions which degrade your humanity, and lead the spirit to perdition by causing it to fail in its trials? Is not the head of the State—the judge who governs wisely, equitably, and extends his solicitude to the meanest of his wards—a father whom you ought to honour, for he governs the great family? And in speaking thus, we include every superior, whatever his condition, who faithfully fulfils his obligations towards his subordinates. The law of love and reverence should extend throughout all ranks and conditions of life. It is the link which binds together all the members of the universal family.

That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

These words are an extension given by Moses to the Fifth Commandment. Its object was again to compel men, in whom selfishness was the only ruling instinct, to respect and obey the law. To live comfortably, and to live long, was their first and only anxiety; and it was necessary to influence them through this weak point, as Moses well knew. But if you take the word "land" in a symbolical sense, you may understand how your life may be prolonged in the dwelling which is reserved for you, in the sense that

Digitized by Google

you can attain it sooner by fulfilling your duties better. You know that the abodes reserved for men who deserve them are the superior spheres to which they attain as soon and in proportion as they raise themselves, and which they will reach sooner by making more efforts to perfect themselves. Man, honour thy father and thy mother, and thy days will be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, but be assured that this land is not the soil beneath thy feet.

The difficulties which have arisen in the interpretation of the commandments are due to men having been unable or unwilling to separate the law itself from additions. The law proceeds from God, and the additions proceed from man, under the Divine inspiration, transmitted by the superior spirits for a transitory purpose. That which proceeds from God is immutable law, but what proceeds from Moses, under this Divine inspiration, was a means of serving the present by the letter, and of preparing for the future by the Spirit, to aid in human progress according to the necessities of the age. Your days cannot be prolonged on earth when you occupy it by incarnation.

In the Spirits' Book we read, relative to death, "'There is nothing inevitable in the true meaning of the word, but the time of death. When that time has come, no matter under what form death presents itself, you cannot escape it.'

"If so, whatever danger may seem to threaten us, we shall not die if our hour has not come?

"'No, you will not be allowed to die, and of this you have thousands of examples; but when your time has come, nothing can save you.'"*

Having regard to these passages, and to what you have just dictated, how are we to understand that the instant of death is fated? Must we understand that it is absolutely thus, and that man can do nothing to shorten his existence by the abuse of his free will; by his actions, or by the use which he makes of his existence, by breaking the conditions which are necessary to make his body last till the end of his trials?

The Spirits' Book is the basis of the revelation, but not all the revelation. If all details had been discussed at the time of its appearance, the storms which it has raised would have been more terrible, its adversaries more numerous, and the struggle more painful. It was needful

* "Spirits' Book," English translation, p. 326, § 853.

Digitized by Google

first to pave the way, and to show the light shining through the dense shades. Presently it spread over the horizon, and will still increase.

From some points of view death is fated; but can you suppose, feeble and limited creatures, that He who dwells in the Infinite, and who takes in at a single glance the innumerable galaxies of stars, measures time as you compute it? Everything is fixed in its course, and determinate in its duration, with respect to Him who is Infinity itself; but yet to you the barrier is not fixed in the sense in which you understand it.

The length of life is determined by the principle that binds the spirit to the body, This fluidic cord, of which you have heard, is the spring which regulates the movements of the body. This spring has a determinate duration, within large limits, as you may understand; but it is not timed to the exact minute of your pendulum, and a less or greater latitude is allowed to you, according to the use which you make of it, just as a bit of caoutchouc may be stretched up to a certain point, in proportion as you exert more or less force or skill.

The duration of the life of man has a natural limit, which is determined in the regular course of his existence by the operation of the immutable laws of Nature, according to circumstances and climates, because the fluids which serve for the formation and support of your beings are related to the climates in which they operate, and matter is in adequate relation to them; for, according to the law of universal harmony, everything is determinate; and within this natural limit lies the irrevocable hour of the end of human life, beyond which the free will of man is absolutely powerless to extend the duration of his body.

This is the inevitable moment, in the true sense; and it is in this sense that the life of man cannot be prolonged beyond its natural limit; but the free will of man is able, either by the resolutions which he formed before incarnation in the spiritual state, or by the use which he makes of his existence in the incarnate state, to arrest the

Digitized by Google

course of his life at a fixed time between his birth and the natural limit of human life.

The free will of the spirit enables him before incarnation, to choose the approximate duration of the body which he is about to assume, provided he fulfils the necessary conditions to cause it to last till the end of his trials; and he should therefore use all his efforts to enable him to continue them to the end.

In this case, the spirit has determined the length of his trials, and the duration of his earthly existence; and his spiritual resolution prevents him from attaining the natural limit, and the body is thus appropriated, under the supervision of the spirits who are appointed to watch over the fulfilment of his trials, in such a manner as to last the appointed time; but it is the duty of the incarnate spirit himself to fulfil every condition necessary to cause his body to last to the end of his trials.

When all these obligations are fulfilled, the instant of death is irrevocable, but not fated, in the strict sense of the term, as it is the result of the free will of the spirit, previous to incarnation. But the incarnate spirit himself can, by the abuse of his free will, and the use which he makes of his existence, arrest the course of his life between his birth and the time fixed by the resolutions which he formed previous to incarnation. This is why the sick man employs his free will in the care of his body to enable him to finish his trials, or can hasten the instant of his death, either by carelessness and indifference, which resemble suicide, or by abuse or excess, when such errors involve an infraction of the conditions necessary to enable his body to last to the end of his trials.

Thus, the time is not fixed from your point of view, although it is so in relation to the Infinite, and to the laws which govern the universe; and cannot overstep certain limits. But the instant of death is not fated, in reference to the duration of your restricted existence, because the natural limit, in the regular course of earthly existence, is rarely attained, and because your spirit-resolutions, or your

Digitized by Google

actions, which are the consequence of your free will, prevent you from attaining to this natural limit.

When the hour has come for man to depart, nothing can prevent him, whether he has attained the natural limit or whether he fails to reach it, either on account of his spirit-resolutions or on account of the use which he has made of his existence, or from neglect of the conditions which it was necessary for him to fulfil to enable his body to last to the end of his trials.

Within the limit which is thus left to you, you are free to move, and to exert your free will, which would otherwise be an unmeaning term, and would inevitably lead every thinking man to the idea of fatalism, predestination, and moral slavery. But there is a distinction between whether your existence is shortened, in regard to the natural limit by your spirit-resolutions, or by your having, in the exercise of your free will, infringed the conditions which it was needful for you to fulfil. When man has fulfilled all the conditions necessary to enable his body to last till the end of his trials, and has decided on a restricted duration of existence by his spirit-resolutions, the instant of his death remains irrevocably fixed; and in such a case, whatever danger may threaten him, he will not die, if his hour has not come. The means required to save him, whatever may be his danger, will be prepared by the spirits who watch over the fulfilment of his trials and expiations. But if his hour has come, he will perish; and you have thousands of instances where some perish and others are saved under precisely similar circumstances. You have already received explanations on this subject, to which you may refer, relative to shipwreck, fire, earthquakes and falls (vol. i. pp. 273–281).

In the case of assassination, the assassin is not the blind instrument of Providence, when he terminates the trial of one who has been marked out for expiation at a definite period. The assassination is the consequence of the free will of the one, and of the trials and expiations of the other, who, having applied the law of retaliation to himself, has

Digitized by Google

either chosen to die a violent death, without fixing the time or the kind of death, or has definitely resolved to die by the hand of an assassin.

In the first case, if the assassin uses his free will to conquer his passions, and spares his intended victim, some other circumstance will arise which will put an end to his trials, according to the determination which he had formed before incarnation. In the second case, if the assassin should use his free will to conquer his passions, and spare his intended victim, the events of life will lead the incarnate spirit, who is to suffer this expiation in the way of another incarnate, whose evil propensities are predominant, that what is decreed may be accomplished.

The incarnate assassin and his victim no longer remember the choice which they had made. One has chosen a trial from whence he is to emerge as the conqueror or the conquered, which constitutes a struggle against a tendency which he should overcome. The other has chosen an expiation which he must suffer as the means of reparation and purification. The victim does not lead himself to the sacrifice, but sometimes unconsciously prepares the path which leads him to it, or else is guided there by the spirits appointed to watch over the accomplishment of his trials and expiations. You should understand our last words. The guides do not direct the acts of the assassin, but they direct the spirit of him who is to suffer the expiation, and the events which lead him in the way either of the expiation or the trial. But do not imagine that the protecting spirit enables the victim to remember the resolution which he has formed, to place himself in the track of events which would lead to the accomplishment of the expiation. Not so, for this would be a moral torture inflicted on the incarnate spirit, and Providence is merciful towards its children; but as we have already explained, the incarnate spirit retains a vague impression in waking, which directs his will and actions.

But if man has not fulfilled the conditions necessary to cause his body to last till the end of his trials, and has thus

Digitized by Google

broken his spirit-resolutions, he hastens the moment of his death, by inducing causes which precipitate it, according to the working of the immutable laws of Nature, by the action of fluids which he has thus attracted, and which complete the destruction of his body; while at the same time he repels the fluids which serve to sustain it.

The man who is inclined to suicide uses his free will, either to put an end to his life in some particular manner, or to turn aside the weapon which he had directed against himself, or else renounces his project. If the period of death fixed by his spirit-resolutions remains irrevocable, because he has fulfilled all the obligations necessary to cause his body to last to the end of his trials, the guardian spirits will provide means to rescue him, the attempted suicide will be prevented, and he will be saved. But do not suppose that a man may attempt suicide with impunity; for, in the first place, suicide is a crime before God; and, in the second, he does not know whether the time has come for him to depart or not. The length of life is fixed; but man's free will may cause him to yield to the evil thought of abridging his existence himself, or else may lead him to conquer the guilty thought.

The man who dies a suicide (like the man who is assassinated, or dies in any other way) would certainly die, but he should have died by a natural death when his time came to depart, either because he has reached the natural limits of human life in the regular course of his existence or in accordance with his spirit-resolutions; or, again, because he has infringed the conditions necessary to enable his body to last to the end of his trials. He has yielded to the temptation against which he should have struggled; and thus he has chosen the kind of death; but the time was come for him to depart. If he had overcome the instincts which led him to destroy himself, he would have emerged victorious from the trial, instead of having to begin again under the same conditions. The feeling which leads man to suicide is not born in him instantaneously. It is a germ, which is developed from a tendency which constitutes a

Digitized by Google

trial, and which must be overcome. If, instead of struggling against this tendency, he yields to it, he dies, and is guilty, because he has failed. But if, instead of yielding to it, he conquers the thought of himself destroying the existence which the Lord has lent him, the hour of deliverance will find him cleansed from an evil action, and the evil thoughts which would have led to it.

The suicide might have struggled against the tendencies which led him to destroy himself, or avoided the series of events which led to this desperate action, and thus have avoided the crime. Man can avoid it, for he can repulse temptations to evil by the power of his will; and he who has chosen, as a trial, to resist the temptation to suicide, may emerge victorious from the struggle, for the goodness of God opens the way for him. It is his duty to overcome it; for, in trials where man is required to conquer his evil tendencies, and to purify his spirit in the furnace of re-incarnation, God leaves him at liberty to choose between the good and the evil. This leads to a struggle, in which there is always the chance of victory or defeat.

Whether man yields to the temptation of suicide or triumphs over it, he always dies when the hour has come for his departure, according to the various contingencies which we have just mentioned. But the infinite wisdom and the foresight of the Lord perceives all things, and knows if man will conquer, or if he will yield; and if he is to be victorious, the Lord, through the guardian spirits who watch over the trials, prepares the events which are to lead him to a natural death; but if the man will succumb to the trial, he leaves his inviolable free will liberty to complete the criminal work by the death which he has prepared for himself, which is thus the guilty act of his will.

This is all that we have to tell you concerning the moment of death, which, when falsely asserted to be fated, in an absolute manner, and under all circumstances, affects the free will of man, and inevitably leads to the idea of fatalism.

Digitized by Google

Sixth Commandment.

Thou shalt not kill.

Let not him who can create nothing destroy the existence of the creatures of the Lord. Let not the instinct of destruction develop itself in the heart of man, for he knows not the responsibility which it brings upon his head. This command is very vague in its terms, and has a much larger range than you suppose, which far surpasses the limits of your existence. Every passing phase of humanity has interpreted it according to its necessities; and every future phase will interpret it by enlarging its meaning and application. In primitive times, "Thou shalt not kill" meant to the Hebrews, "Thou shalt not shed the blood of thy brother without a motive;" but capital punishment was enforced for the slightest offence; the blood of victims offered in sacrifice flowed constantly on the altar; and the slaves were as little regarded as the beasts. At a later period the punishment of death becomes more rare; it is only inflicted for definite crimes; the slaves have acquired civil rights, and even the animals have been spared to some extent, at least as regards the ceremonies of religion; but revenge, war, and cruelty have shed, and still continue to shed, blood on all sides.

At the present day, those who have listened to our voices, and even those who have not understood them and believe them to be false, are rising up against capital punishment for crime, and look forward to the moment when men will no longer be ranged in order to discharge deadly missiles against each other. Some who listen to us spare the lives of all the feeble creatures which the Lord has placed in their power, to develop their charity and make them understand the universal solidarity; but blood still flows in the slaughter-houses, and the victims needed for human food constantly fall under the butcher's knife.

At a later period no more blood will be shed on the earth, and man will kill nothing. He will love and protect the weak, whether it be a man like himself or an animal

Digitized by Google

placed under his care. He will understand the law of love, and be able to raise himself above the needs of the flesh. It is still necessary to satisfy these needs, for they belong to the present construction of the machine; but they will gradually diminish in proportion as the spirit increases in wisdom and knowledge; and you will then behold the organism also gradually modified; physical progress advancing and developing itself at the same time, and in a manner corresponding to moral and intellectual progress.*

At the present time, capital punishment is abolished in some parts of Europe, and more or less in others.

These are general efforts and preliminary trials, but the moment to abolish capital punishment has not yet come. It is necessary for the morals of the inferior classes to be purified—not the inferior classes as regards social conditions, but as regards the moral and social advancement of spirits, before the good time which you look for will come. But it is for men, and especially for spiritists, to hasten the coming of this possible and desirable result by your teaching and example.

Seventh Commandment.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

The material nature of man leads him into lust. Nothing can restrain his desires when he abandons himself to the animal instincts; and these were especially predominant in the earlier ages. Do you not still see them lead your brethren into shameful errors? The bonds which unite man and woman have a pure and noble origin, which the materiality of incarnation has turned aside, but to which it must return.

The command to abstain from adultery was intended to check excess; but in this case also it has been interpreted according to the necessities of the age. The man or married woman were punished—the woman with death and the man with disgrace. The command extends,

* Compare the "Spirits' Book," book iii. chap. vi., On the Law of Destruction (English edition, pp. 285–296).

Digitized by Google

according to the spirit, to every departure from pure union. It condemns all the carnal propensities which lower the human species to the instincts of the brute.

We do not tell you, "God created one man and one woman that they should have one existence only." There is the moral object, which Moses proposed from the Hebrew point of view under the letter, and which remained there for future generations. You know what has already been explained respecting the emblematic figure of Creation, and the Creation itself.* But we tell you this. Spirits group themselves by sympathetic attractions. Every spirit chooses his or her companion with whom to pass the period of their trial. The only exception is in the case of the trial of celibacy.

Incarnate spirits are generally born into conditions which allow the sympathetic spirits who are designed for union to meet; but the material dispositions of one or other in the incarnate state may accidentally break the harmony and retard their union, either within the limits of the present incarnation or until another incarnation. Thus it is that you behold a sympathetic spirit repulsed, despised, or abandoned by one whom it attracts, or to whom it is attracted, and permitting itself to be led astray, either by outward attractions or by pride, ambition, or avarice.

When two sympathetic spirits are united according to their mutual choice, made previous to incarnation, nothing can again separate them in a union thus realized, having the same tendencies to good; and to such the commandments has no need to say, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." But if the spirits are once incarnate, and are too little regardful of the engagements taken in the spiritual state, which they have forgotten, but of which the secret instinct remains in their hearts, and allow themselves to be led astray by the influence of matter, the male and female spirits seek for nothing but a momentary material satisfaction int he conjugal union, or a mathematical or social combi-

* Compare what has been said on the origin of the spirit, the soul, and man and woman on the earth, and on the primitive worlds.

Digitized by Google

nation, or some purpose of interest or pride. Then the sympathetic bonds are broken by earthly engagements; the heart is not filled with pure affection, and the spirit seeks distraction in variety and misconduct. To such the commandment says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" for if you have imposed on yourself a chain which is heavy to bear, you must suffer the consequences, and must, by the respect which you shew for your inconsiderate engagements, lessen the fault which you have committed in contracting it. You must overcome your sensual instincts; you must conquer the flesh, and awaken that sympathy which ought to exist between your spirit and the companion whom you have inconsiderately chosen; and the day of liberty will come by the return of both to the spiritual life.

Sometimes the union is forced upon the incarnate spirit by the influence and authority of the parents from motives of interest or pride. In such a case, it is a trial which the spirit has chosen, which is either temporary or destined to last during its whole earthly existence; and it only retards the sympathetic union with the object of its choice, or perhaps postpones it to another incarnation. And the commandment speaks in the same language to those who are thus united by the deviation of their trials, as to those who have entered into an unreflecting engagement.

Sometimes also, spirits who are anxious to overcome the antipathy which they feel towards each other, though this feeling is not always reciprocal, choose to unite themselves humanly, as a trial. To these also the commandment says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and the gentle voice of Jesus adds, "What God has joined, let not man put asunder."

In conclusion, we say again that spirits are destined to union. They decide before incarnation to pass their time of trial together, and aid each other mutually, excepting in cases where one or the other deviates from the accomplishment of their spirit-resolutions. But whether this deviation takes place or not, and whether the choice is in agreement with their spirit-resolutions, or the contrary, it is not the

Digitized by Google

result of what you call chance, but results from the direction given to the trials, in consequence of which (whether freely and voluntarily, or by compulsion, and whether the spirit is turned from its course, or not) the choice is made. But if, after this choice, one or both spirits stray from their course, they may meet at some future time during the present incarnation, or be separated until another incarnation; which will renew the same sympathies or the same intentions, in the case of trial, and by repeated choice enable them to accomplish it.

Celibacy is also a trial to some and a deviation to others. Those who are destined to celibacy as a trial have not chosen their companion in life; or (not to leave room for false interpretations) have not decided that the union should take place. It would lead us into too much detail to explain all the cases of celibacy by deviation. Let it suffice to say that celibacy may arise from selfishness, from irregular habits, from indifference, from avarice, or from quietism, which, by a false spirituality, makes Christian perfection consist in inaction of the soul, and the neglect of outward works. This may arise from an engagement taken as a condition of the Catholic priesthood, by men and women entering the monastic or religious orders. This engagement results, as we have explained (vol. ii. pp. 235–239), from a mis-interpretation of the words of Christ (Matt. xix. 22). The Church could not understand these words; and what took place during the Christian era, under the veil of the letter, had its use, apart from errors and abuses, but will cease during the new era of the Christianity of Christ, under the dominion of the Spirit.

Eighth Commandment.

Thou shalt not steal.

Pride and envy are the secret enemies which man bears within himself. It is these possessions which lead him to possess himself of everything which he desires, whether morally or physically, and which impel him to use force or fraud for success. To impose respect for the property of

Digitized by Google

others, whatever it may be, upon man, is to compel him to conquer these roots of all evil by leading him to practise the laws of labour, justice, love, and charity, which banish selfishness and envy from his heart, and exclude from his thoughts and actions the errors and excesses of the spirit and the flesh; and thus exclude the instinct and necessity of stealing, in any way whatsoever. Such is the object of this commandment.

Ninth Commandment.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Jesus tells you, "It is not that which enters into the mouth of a man which defiles him, but that which comes out of the mouth, and proceeds from the heart."

Truth in all its simplicity should inspire the words of him who fears God, and seeks to walk in his ways. This commandment was appropriate to the age when a man might in some cases be put to death on the testimony of another man; but by enlarging its principle, it extends to and enlightens all succeeding ages. Even in your own times, a man may be put to death on the evidence of another, but such cases are less common, for the justice of man has progressed, like everything else. But in the time of the Hebrews, when the command was given, it was enough for a man to accuse another of blasphemy or some other offence, to cause him to be stoned; and the Hebrew customs and traditions left traces in your human laws for long ages, and under various aspects, both civil, political, and religious, during the Christian era.

Not to bear false witness is to pay homage to the truth at all times, in all places, and in all cases. It is to unfurl your flag without shame or defection; it is not to fear to raise aloft the light of truth; it is to break the bushel which covers it to cause it to shine forth to the eyes of all. Not to bear false witness is always to walk in perfect accord with your conscience.

Digitized by Google

Tenth Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything which is thy neighbour's.

This commandment is a further extension of that which says "Thou shalt not steal." It teaches man that it is not enough to abstain from an evil action, but that he ought also to guard against evil thoughts; for in the sight of God the thought is in many cases the same as the act. In fact, if a man cherishes an evil design, but is unable to execute it either through fear of the laws or through a course of events which prevent it, is he not as guilty as the man who commits it? He has had no opportunity; that is all.

Cleanse the sepulchres of your hearts; purify your thoughts; and let there not be one which could cause you to blush before your brethren; for what you would not dare to acknowledge to men who are fallible like yourselves, is exposed to the eyes of your supreme Judge, who searches the most secret recesses of your hearts. Covet nothing, nor premeditate anything evil, nor allow yourselves to indulge in any evil thoughts, for he who searches the hearts and the reins judges of feelings as well as of actions.

May the Lord pour his blessings upon you.

MOSES.

Love of God and of the Neighbour.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might (Deut. vi. 5). Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Lev. xix. 18; Matt. xxii. 37–40; Mark xii. 28–31; Luke x. 25–37).

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. . . . Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey (Deut. vi. v. 6–9, 3).

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matt. xxii. 40).

Digitized by Google

To love God is to render homage to the principle of love, the cause of life.

What can an insignificant creature like man, and the spirit which animates so gross a form, do to evince his gratitude to the Omnipotent Creator for all the treasures that he has put into his hands, that he may draw from them continually? He can love, for love inspires submission, reverence, and gratitude. Love is the only link which binds the creature to the Creator; and this love should be manifested under all forms, for it represents the entire creation.

To love God, man must cleanse his heart, mind, and body from all the impurities which defile them; for love leads to nearness, and nothing impure can approach God. Man should therefore cleanse his body, for it is the instrument which his spirit employs for the accomplishment of his trials and of his ascending course by incarnation in the path of moral, physical, and intellectual progress. He should cleanse his heart, spirit, and body, in order to obtain purification of heart and spirit, and by their purification to obtain physical progress, and thus the increasing purification of the bodily envelope, by means of disengagement from the impurities of matter, in the course of successive and progressive lives, and of the ascending hierarchy of worlds.

To love God, man must work constantly to enlarge his intelligence, to develop his knowledge, and extend his science; for ignorance cannot approach omniscience, and all love tends to union.

To love God is to lose oneself in humanity and to be absorbed in fraternal love; for every man, like all the creatures of the Lord, proceeds from the same principle, tends towards the goal, and is a portion of Being divided to infinity, and destined to rise from the infinitely little to the infinitely great, in individuality and immortality. Do not misunderstand these expressions, which might then give rise to false impressions, leading to false and erroneous pantheistic ideas. You can understand them by referring to what we have already explained concerning God, the origin of

Digitized by Google

the spiritual essence, and the soul and spirit, its phases, ends, and destinies, and on the origin of the worlds of all orders of creation, spiritual, fluidic, and material (vol. i. §§ 56–61, pp. 108–146).

We have already explained to you that God, the Uncreated Creator, is personal and distinct from the creation and from the creature, as the cause is personal and distinct from the effect which it produces; as the Infinite, the Uncreated, is personal and distinct from the finite and the created; and as eternity is personal and distinct from time. God, the Uncreated Creator, is thus personal and distinct from the creation and from the creatures which are of him, by him, and in him, but which are not him.

God is Thought, Intelligence, and Fluid, dwelling (to use the words of the Apostle Paul) in inaccessible light, and who alone possesses immortality. And the universal fluid proceeding from him is the instrument of the creation of all worlds and of all beings, in all the kingdoms of Nature, and of everything which lives and moves and has its being.

We have also shown you the spirit at its origin and formation as a spiritual essence rising from the universal Whole by the will of the Omnipotent Lord God, who animates the essence of the fluids to give it being, and to form the spiritual essences by means of a subtle combination existing only in the Divine rays. These spiritual essences are the primitive principles of the spirit in its germ, and in this sense they are a portion of being divided from the Infinite, for the purpose of ascending from the infinitely little to the infinitely great in individuality and immortality.

We have also shown you the great law of magnetic attraction, by the magnetic fluids which envelope us like a single being to enable us to ascend to God by uniting our efforts; binding all the worlds in the infinite universe together, and uniting all spirits, whether incarnate or not; and thus uniting all the creations and all the creatures with God, who is Uncreated, Immutable, Eternal, and Infinite. Infinite, too, is the Universal Whole of which we

Digitized by Google

form part, and over which he rules; and each and all derive their being from him, by him, and in him, and all are linked together in the bonds of union and solidarity.

Consequently the whole of humanity ought to regard itself as one individuality; an immense body in which each individual member forms part of the Whole; and everything therefore ought to tend towards human harmony, and wait till it can raise itself to the celestial harmony.

Thus, to love one's neighbour as oneself is the consequence of the love of God, and it is in this sense and from the point of view of human and universal unity and solidarity in God, that Jesus, according to the Spirit of Truth, after quoting the commandment to love God, and saying, "This is the first and greatest commandment," quoted the command to love the neighbour as oneself, adding, "The second is like unto it."

The two commands, according to the letter, and for the Hebrews, were addressed to their nationality; but, according to the Spirit hidden beneath the letter, Israel was symbolically the personification of the whole of humanity; and when Jesus said, "These two commandments include all the law and the prophets," he proclaimed to all men, both Jews and Gentiles, that they contain the only means of salvation (that is, of purification and progress), and form the only path towards perfection and towards eternal life, the life of the pure spirits, where all is rapture, light, happiness, activity, and perseverance in study, to advance continually further and further in universal science, in infinity and eternity, where all is love and devotion, and activity and perseverance in love and devotion, for universal progress in universal life and harmony.

Therefore, men, practise these two commandments with sincerity and zeal, without rest, and incessantly; and never do to others, by word or deed, what you would not have others do to you; but on the contrary do everything to others which you would have others do to you, according to whatsoever is just, good, and true in the material, moral, and intellectual order; for Jesus added, "This is all

Digitized by Google

the law and the prophets," and as he has also proclaimed, it must and will be rendered to each according to his works, and everyone will be judged by his works at the tribunal of his conscience, where sits the Tribunal of God.

Thus prepare yourselves by practising justice, love, and charity with sincerity, humility, and disinterestedness, for the advent of human fraternity, which can alone establish liberty and equality, and cause them to reign on your earth. And at length liberty and equality for all and between all, before God and man, will rule over your earth under the empire of the law of reciprocity and solidarity. And when each and all understand and practise right and duty, both in social, family, and private life, they will thus prepare for the advent of the kingdom of God on your earth, under the empire and operation of the law of love and charity.

MOSES, MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN,
With the Concurrence of the Apostles.

END OF PART III.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS OF VOL. III.

PART II.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

	PAGE
The Word—Mission of John the Baptist	1
Testimony of John to himself and to Jesus	38
The Lamb of God	39
The First Disciples	40
Philip and Nathanael	41
Marriage of Cana	42
Jesus in the Temple	45
Interview with Nicodemus	46
John bears Testimony to Jesus	71
The Woman of Samaria	76
Testimony of the Woman of Samaria—Words of Jesus to his Disciples	91
Cure of the Son of a Nobleman at Capernaum	94
The Pool of Bethesda	95
Constant Action of the Father and of Jesus	96
The Father's Testimony to Jesus	107
The Scripture Testimony to Jesus	109
Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes	115
Jesus Walking on the Lake	116
The Mission of Jesus	117
The Jews Murmur against Jesus	120
The Morality of Jesus	122
Murmurs of some of the Disciples	124
Incredulity of the relatives of Jesus	127

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles 128
The Adulteress 134
Address of Jesus to the Jews 135
Continuation of the Address 138
Conclusion of the Conversation 144
Cure of a Man Blind from his Birth 146
The Blind Man and the Pharisees 148
Jesus and the Blind Man 149
Parable of the Door and the Sheepfold 151
The Good Shepherd 154
Jesus Replies to the Accusations of the Jews . . . 158
Raising of Lazarus 162
Conspiracy against Jesus 177
Mary Perfumes the Feet of Jesus 178
Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem 180
The Gentiles Desire to see Jesus—His Remarks . . 180
Continuation of the Words of Jesus 188
Unbelief of the Jews 190
The Light of the World 191
Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet 192
Jesus Foretells the Treason of Judas 197
Love one Another 199
The Many Mansions 200
Promise of the Comforter 208
Parable of the Vine and its Shoots 214
Love one Another 217
Jesus Warns his Disciples of Persecution 220
Predictions of Jesus 226
Jesus promises his Disciples Joy after Sorrow . . . 233
Predictions of Jesus 234
Prayer of Jesus 236
Arrest of Jesus 243
Jesus before Pilate 245
The Jews Demand the Crucifixion of Jesus 247
Jesus Questioned by Pilate 248
The Crucifixion 249
The Garments of Jesus—His Charge to John . . . 249

Digitized by Google

PAGE
Apparent Death of Jesus 250
Burial of Jesus 254
Mary Magdalene at the Tomb 254
Appearance of Jesus to the Apostles 255
Jesus and Thomas 256
Jesus at the Lake of Tiberias 259

PART III.

COMMENTARY ON THE DECALOGUE.

The Decalogue 263
First Commandment 271
Second „ 271
Third „ 273
Fourth „ 274
Fifth „ 277
Sixth „ 285
Seventh „ 286
Eighth „ 289
Ninth „ 290
Tenth „ 291
Love of God, and of the Neighbour 291

THE END.

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY ALLAN KARDEC.

THE SPIRIT'S BOOK.

Containing the Principles of Spiritist Doctrine on the Immortality of the Soul, &c. &c., according to the Teachings of Spirits of High Degree, transmitted through various mediums, collected and set in order by ALLAN KARDEC. Translated from the 120th thousand by ANNA BLACKWELL. Crown 8vo, cloth, 7*s.* 6*d.*

THE MEDIUM'S BOOK;

Or, Guide for Mediums and for Evocations. Containing the Theoretic Teachings of Spirits concerning all kinds of Manifestations, the Means of Communication with the Invisible World, the Development of Medianimity, &c. &c. By ALLAN KARDEC. Translated by ANNA BLACKWELL. Crown 8vo, cloth, 7*s.* 6*d.*

HEAVEN AND HELL;

Or, The Divine Justice Vindicated in the Plurality of Existences. By ALLAN KARDEC. Translated by ANNA BLACKWELL. Crown 8vo, cloth, 7*s.* 6*d.*

London: TRÜBNER & Co. Ludgate Hill.

THE PROBABLE EFFECT OF SPIRITISM UPON THE SOCIAL, MORAL, AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF SOCIETY.

A Prize Essay.

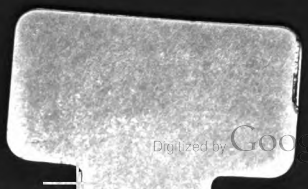
By ANNA BLACKWELL.

London: TRÜBNER & Co. Price 6*d.*

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google


Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Fresh Leavls

IN THE

Old Testament Part

of

The Book & its Story

By L. H. K.

600090615R

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LIBRARY

FRESH LEAVES

IN

THE OLD TESTAMENT PART

OF

The Book and its Story.

BY

L. N. R.

WITH SEVENTY ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:
WILLIAM MACINTOSH,
24, PATERNOSTER ROW;
AND ALL OTHER BOOKSELLERS.
1869.

101. f. 792

Digitized by Google

BODLEIAN LIBRARY
19 MAY 83
OXFORD.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

THOSE who have followed this volume in its course of monthly issue, will be aware of its intent and purpose. It directs to the STORY of the DIVINE BOOK, *as contained in itself*, marks the inspired men who tell it, and shews how the separate books of the Old Testament are, as it were, built into one another, each one successively needful to the understanding of those which come after it.

These FRESH LEAVES have been issued in large print for those who do not read very easily, but who wish to be presented, when they sit down to read the Bible, with some thoughts and facts about each of its books, which shall help them to read it *intelligently*, not merely as a duty, and to perceive the bearing of its various parts upon each other. We have had some testimony already from "Bible-women," "City Missionaries," and "Working-men," that it is the kind of book *they* wanted "on a Sunday afternoon." But now it appears as a volume, it is by no means limited to their circle, and it is hoped it may be found useful in Sunday-schools and Bible classes, and to young people in general.

These Leaves are intended to convey information in a clear and simple way which in these days every Bible reader should possess, and to lead to further search of the Holy Scriptures for spiritual profit.

It is hoped that each careful reader will have a Bible at hand, to turn to the passage mentioned, and will lift up a prayer, in the name of Christ, for

Digitized by Google

the Holy Ghost—whom "the Father will send,"—"who shall teach us all things," "bring all things to remembrance," and "guide us into all truth."

The volume has XVII Nos. or Chapters:—

No. I. "The World before the Flood,"
II. "The Times between the Flood and Abram,"
III. "The Life of Abraham,"
IV. "Arabia and the Patriarch Job,"
V. "Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph, in Egypt,"
VI. "Moses, the Servant of God,"
VII. "From Egypt to Sinai,"
VIII. "The Giving of the Law on Mount Sinai,"
IX. "The Graves in the Wilderness,"
X. "The Closing Year in the Wilderness,"
XI. "Joshua, Moses' Minister,"
XII. "The Times of the Book of Judges,"
XIII. "Samuel the Prophet,"
XIV. "The Times of the Kings and the Prophets,"
XV. "From Elisha to Isaiah."
XVI. "The Fall of Judah,"
XVII. "Jeremiah and the Nations,"
XVIII. "The Prophets of the Captivity and the Return of the Remnant."

Hence the world's history, by an unerring hand, is seen to be given in that of *one* particular nation still everywhere scattered and known of all. The whole of the Old Testament concerns them, and God teaches *all* nations by their fall from His favor. It is written—"They are enemies for your sakes, but they are beloved for the fathers' sakes;" and it is written also—"There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." (Rom. xi. 28, 26.)

L. N. R.

Digitized by Google

FULL PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS.

No.		PAGE.
1.	MOUNT ARARAT (*to face*)	1
2.	NINEVEH TEMPLE	21
3.	SCHECHEM OR NABLUS	41
4.	THE CASTLE OF SALKHAD	61
5.	RUINS OF KARNAK	81
6.	THE FIVE-PEAKED SERBAL	101
7.	WADY FEIRAN	121
8.	SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH	141
9.	KIBROTH HATTAAVAH	161
10.	DOOR FROM THE GIANT CITIES	181
11.	JERUSALEM	201
12.	KING OF NINEVEH	221
13.	THE ARCH OF TITUS	241
14.	THE TOMB OF DANIEL	261
15.	ANCIENT ROME	281
16.	NESTORIAN MOUNTAINS	301
17.	THE ROCK OF BEHISTUN	321
18.	ATHENS	341

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LIST OF MINOR ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE.
Map of Arabia	14
Assyrian Clay Tablet	28
The Temple of Mugeyer or Ur	30
Cylinder of Nabonidus, B.C. 555	31
One of Urukh's Bricks	32
Hoa or Noah	34
The Presence of Asshur	38
The King of Nineveh Worshipping	39
Map of Eastern Palestine	44
The Arab Sheikh	64
The Mohammedan Hour of Prayer	80
Portico of Dendera	87
Egyptian Cherubim	88
Statues of Amenophis III	90
The Rosetta Stone	91
Hieroglyph of "the Hebrews"	99
The Passover Lamb	115
The Wells of Moses	123
Map of Sinai	125
Sinaitic Inscription in the British Museum	136
Sinaitic Inscription	136
Figure of Hebrew MSS. Roll	154
The Written Samaritan Alphabet	156
The Phœnician Alphabet	156
Tables of Stone, with Rolls of the Hebrew Pentateuch, The Septuagint, and the Greek Version of the New Testament	159

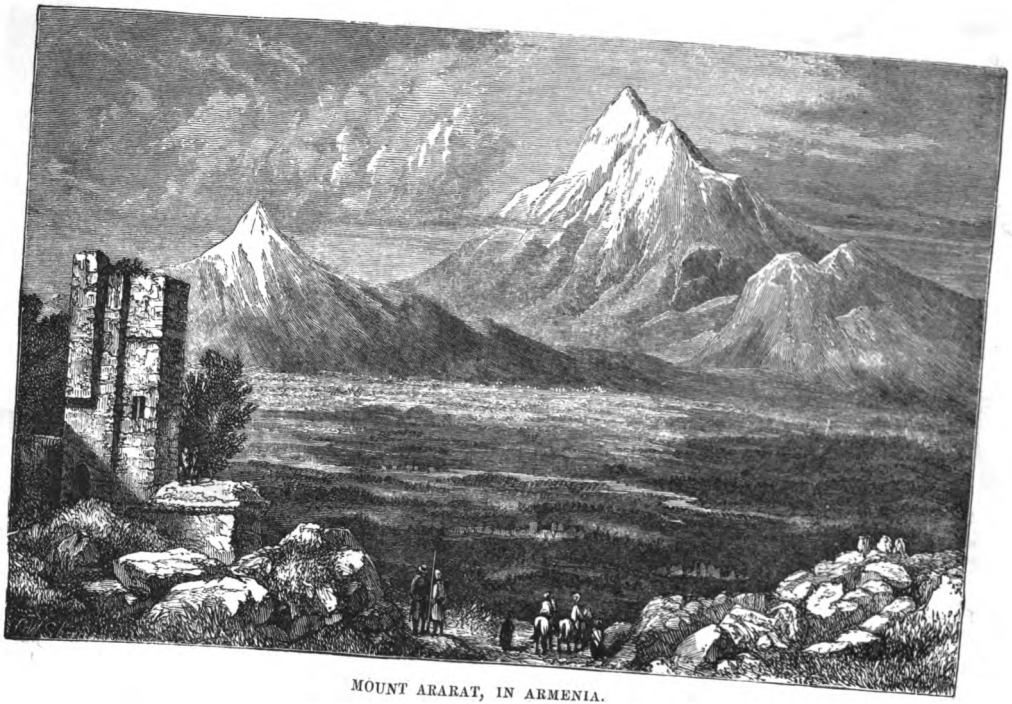
Digitized by Google

PAGE.

Two Sinaitic Characters, actual size 171
Socket of Stone Door 192
Sacred Tree and Heathen Cherubim 209
The Presence of Asshur in the Triumphal Procession . 209
Signet of Asshur 209
King of Ancient Babylon 210
Ornament on Dress of Kings of Nineveh 211
Babylonian Landmark 212
The Assyrian God—Dagon 230
Bel and the Dragon 232
Jews bringing Tribute 233
The Jewish Costume 234
King of the North West Palace 237
Two Tables of Jewish Kings and Prophets . 270—280
The Captive of Karnak 275
The Black Obelisk 286
Cylinders of Tiglath-Pileser 293
The God Nebo 298
Sennacherib in his Chariot 304
Sennacherib 307
Cylinder of Sennacherib 309
Figure called Nisroch 319
A Family of Modern Nestorians 312
A Case of MSS. Rolls 322
Pilgrims to Jerusalem 328
Captives taken in Susiana 337
Ancient Coffin from Babylonia 343

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



MOUNT ARARAT, IN ARMENIA.

Digitized by Google

THE TIMES BEFORE OUR BIBLE.

No. I.

We do not wish our Biblewomen to be *learned* teachers, they never can become so, but we wish them to be wise, to win souls. All true wisdom is found in the Scriptures, and they should know something of the wonderful story of the Book they circulate.

And the men and women who buy the Bible, or already possess it, though perhaps it lies dusty on their shelves, should learn a few things about it which would shew them what a treasure it is, and how it *proves itself* to be the most truthful book in the world.

The Bible is one great narrative or Inspired Story, which falls into distinct parts. It was once called by the name of "The Books," "The Divine Library," but now by common consent, and for the last 700 years, it is called The Book, or The Bible. In the first part of the Bible we find *the five books of Moses.* They were afterwards called by Grecian Jews, the Pentateuch.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, are the names of the books. These, and probably the book of Job also, were all written before the Israelites entered Canaan, the Land of Promise; the five books of Moses formed their early [illegible] the Book of the Law or *Torâh*, which was laid [illegible] in the side of the ark for a witness to the people.

Digitized by Google

We can learn the state of the world before the Pentateuch was written, from Moses only, who tells the story of the earth from the beginning, though he was not born till 777 years after the Flood; and we may well believe that God inspired him to convey all that it was chiefly important to us to know about the drowned world. There is a meaning in the *silence* of Holy Scripture, and infinite wisdom has decided what it should reveal.

At the beginning of his second book—EXODUS, Moses gives us his own history and parentage. He was a grandson of Levi, who was the third son of Jacob, and Abraham's great-grandson. Moses was himself the great-great-grandson of Isaac, "the chosen seed of Abraham." Isaac stood twenty-first from Adam, and Moses only twenty-fifth; Enoch being the seventh, and Eber the fourteenth in descent.

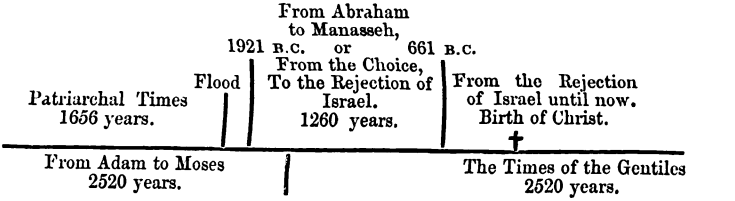
Jochebed, the mother of Moses, was Levi's daughter, and her great-grandfather Isaac had lived on to the thirty-fourth year of his grandson Levi. It is quite possible that Isaac may have seen and known SHEM, who had lived a hundred years with Methuselah, whose life had crossed Adam's by 243 years.

Jochebed, the mother of Moses and Aaron, would surely receive from her father's own lips what he had heard from Isaac, and Isaac from Shem, of the world before the Flood.

How few the links, and how clearly to be traced! Adam, Methuselah, Shem, Isaac, Levi, Jochebed, Moses. These seven united lives extended over 2520 years, (not inclusive of the last thirty-three years of Moses with the people in the wilderness) during which time many parts of the first five books of the Bible are concluded to have been written.

Digitized by Google

The whole of human history is represented by the following line, according to the Scripture chronology, or time-table, and if this is once understood it will be easy to remember the place of any narratives in the Bible.



Now we wish in our first three tracts to consider the space, on the left hand, of 2520 years, which is made up as follows—

1656 Before the Flood.
777 After it to the birth of Moses.
87 Years of the life of Moses, including the first seven of the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness, during which the laws of Jehovah were given and recorded. They were to be read to the people every seven years after their entrance to the Promised Land.
2520

And how do we know that this was the length of the Patriarchal Age?

By the testimony of the book of Genesis itself; look at the 5th chapter. Do you wonder why we are so particularly told there how long each patriarch lived, and how old he was when his first son was born? perhaps you think—

"We will not read that chapter, the people were born and they died, that seems all."

But *it is not all.* From that chapter and the 10th chapter you can make for yourselves two tables of the age of the world before the Law was given on

Digitized by Google

Mount Sinai. In case you have not time, we have prepared them for you, that you may have them to refer to if you hear people quote the *longer* genealogies of the *heathen* nations of Egypt and China, and India, etc. There is no revelation from God to prove *them*, but He has chosen to give us a Chronology or Table of Time in His own Book, and why should we not receive it along with the History?

TABLE OF AGE OF THE PATRIARCHS BEFORE THE FLOOD.

	BORN.		DIED.		
	Before the Flood.	Year of the World.	Before the Flood.	Year of the World.	Total Age.
Adam . . .	1656	1	726	930	930
Seth . . .	1526	130	614	1042	912
Enos . . .	1421	235	516	1140	905
Cainan . .	1331	325	421	1235	910
Mahalaleel .	1261	395	366	1290	895
Jared . . .	1196	460	234	1422	962
Enoch . . .	1034	622	669 (translated)	987	365
Methuselah .	969	687		1656	969
Lamech . .	782	874	5	1651	777
Noah . . .	600	1056			600
Shem . . .	98	1553			98

Digitized by Google

TABLE OF AGE OF THE PATRIARCHS AFTER THE FLOOD.

		BORN.		DIED.		
		After the Flood.	Before Christ.	After the Flood.	Before Christ.	Total Age.
Gen. x., xi., xii.	Noah . .	..	..	350	1998	950
	Shem. .	..	..	500	1848	598
	Arphaxad	2	2346	440	1908	438
	Salah. .	37	2311	470	1878	433
	Eber . .	67	2281	531	1817	464
	Peleg. .	101	2247	340	2008	239
	Reu . .	131	2217	370	1978	239
	Serug .	163	2185	393	1955	230
	Nahor .	193	2155	341	2007	148
	Terah .	222	2126	427	1921	205
	Abraham	352	1996	527	1821	175
xvi., xxv.	Ishmael .	438	1910	575	1773	137
xxi., xxxv.	Isaac . .	452	1896	632	1716	180
xxv., xlvii.	Jacob .	512	1836	659	1689	147
	Esau .	512	1836			
xxxvii.,xli.,l.	Joseph .	603	1745	713	1635	110
xxxvi. 33.	Job . .	597	1751	837	1511	240
Exod. vi.	Levi . .	598	1750	735	1613	137
	Kohath .	623	1725	756	1592	133
	Amram .	702	1646	839	1509	137
	Moses .	777	1571	897	1451	120

Digitized by Google

It is very singular that with Moses this table of the length of the patriarchal lives ceases, and can no further be traced through Levi; it continues beyond Jacob only in the case of that *one* of his twelve sons, Levi; for the ages of all the others, except Joseph's, are left untold, and cannot be discovered. At this point the record seems to have accomplished its purpose.

It is very probable, though we have no proof of it, that the art of writing was known before the Flood. There may have been certain documents preserved in the tents of the patriarchs, which, as we have seen, *seven* of these long-lived and holy men were sufficient to hand down, and they doubtless too talked over their contents one to another. The history contained in Genesis could not have been narrated by Moses, *as an eye-witness;* but whether he received it by immediate suggestion from God, or was directed by His Holy Spirit to the use of earlier documents, does not affect the inspiration of the book at all.

Moses takes but the first seven chapters of Genesis to describe the state of the world before the Flood. It was an evil day; and two men could have told all its story—Adam and Methuselah, whose lives stretched across the whole period, which yet was less only by 200 years than our own era since the birth of Christ. There seemed a freshness *then* in the relations between God and man which we scarcely meet with afterwards in all the Divine records. We hear of no written law; but of voices direct from heaven: "God spake to one patriarch after another." The Lord God *said* to Adam or to Noah, and He speaks in judgment to Cain.

To Adam and Eve, after the cruel death of Abel, a third son was given—SETH, meaning appointed;

Digitized by Google

he was the appointed one, through whose line the Redeemer of the lost world would come; for there was a Gospel, or "good tidings" of restoration from the curse even before the Flood: a revelation, or the rolling back of a veil from the purposes of God, see (Gen. iii. 15). Seth has a son, whom he names Enos, and "then began men to call upon" (or to call themselves by) "the name of the Lord."

Adam was but 235 years old when his grandson Enos was born, and he may have lived with his grandfather 700 years. It seems that thus early there arose those who were known as the "sons of God" in the midst of an evil generation who were of the sons of men—always "striving with their maker," and to whom Job alludes in the 22nd chapter of his ancient book (16, 17 verses) as "wicked men"—

"Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood: which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?"

Or as the Rev. C. P. Carey has it in his translation—

"Were questioning what the Almighty had done for them, when yet He filled their houses with good."

Yet these "sons of men" were strong and mighty, able and inventive; and their daughters were so fair that their beauty beguiled the sons of God, and drew them from their separateness from the sinful world. Ere Adam died, Tubal Cain, Cain's descendant, had been working for centuries in brass and iron, and instructing other artificers to fashion tools, and doubtless weapons; the song of Lamech, Gen. iv. 23, is supposed to be a chant of triumph over the possession of a sword; and Jubal of the same race and era had sought out the witcheries of music, and he was already the father of all who "handled the harp and the organ."

Digitized by Google

Cain had gone out with his family from the presence of the Lord (possibly the cherubic presence at the gate of Eden).

"At the east of the garden of Eden were cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." (Gen. iii. 24.)

All the hearts and lives of Cain's posterity were given, we may suppose, to the advance of arts and manufactures, and of their *own* glory. There were giants in those days, and with their long life and vast strength it is fearful to think of their rate of progress away from God. Cain himself had built the first "fenced city," and Lamech, Cain's great, great, great grandson, was the first man who took two wives.

Have we ever thought men did not know or do much in those early days? Why, if they learn to do so much *now* in seventy or eighty years, what must they have done in seven hundred? A man makes a discovery or an improvement *now*, and he dies before he can perceive its full results. All he can do to hand it down, is to write about it; but in those days a man could build thought upon thought, experiment upon experiment, for hundreds of years, and he could shew hundreds of other people who had taste for the same things all that he had performed. Many people dispute this length of patriarchal life, which, judging by man's present constitution, they say, would be in itself a continual miracle, and they add, "perhaps years mean *months*."

How can that be?

"Seth lived 105 years, and begat Enos"; and if it was read 105 *months*, then he was a father before he was nine years old! No; we must consider that the great age of the first patriarchs was in their

Digitized by Google

time appointed of God. The past in this case cannot be measured by the *present.* There is no earthly historian but Moses of the ages before the Flood; and he was inspired of God. God says to Joshua "As I was with Moses; so I will be with thee," (Josh i. 5); and David witnesses, "The Lord made known his ways unto Moses." No other human writing has remained from that age to distract our faith. God asked for faith in HIMSELF from Enoch, from Noah, and from Abraham; and He asks it from *us* now: "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Alas! our Lord Jesus Himself said, "When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?" and this coming must have been His coming *again,* for it relates to the avenging of His own elect. (Luke xviii. 8.) So that when we see infidelity and superstition growing up like rank weeds higher and higher around us, as they are doing at present, it is more than ever important for us to examine what we DO believe about the Book of God, and to notice how very early in its pages we are led to think of the judgments coming in our latter days on ungodly sinners for all their "hard speeches" concerning the God they do not know.

Faith in God often involves not seeing how a thing can be, and yet believing that it *was,* because God says it.

Belief in HIMSELF was evidently the first "righteousness" that God demanded from man, for it would be the root of all obedience. If he did not believe God he would not obey Him; and we may well suppose that Adam's simple confidence in his Creator was *entire* as that of the little child in its father and its mother to this day, before its sinful nature or sad experience makes it disbelieve them.

Digitized by Google

When Abram's trust in God was asked for, beneath the arch of the starry heavens, by the God of all their hosts, (Gen. xv. 5, 6,) *he* believed in the Lord, and "it was counted to him for righteousness." The practical form of belief is displayed in Enoch also, who "walked with God," and must have enjoyed intimate converse with Him; for if he were informed—as, according to St. Jude, he was—of the *second* coming of the Lord to Judgment, with ten thousand of His saints, he could scarcely have been left ignorant of the earlier event of the Lord's *first coming as a sacrifice* to redeem our sinful race.

Sacrifices of animals to God for every sin were claimed of men as soon as they had passed the gate of Eden; which early *sign-ified* that nothing the earth could offer — none of its fairest fruits or flowers, the reward of man's first industry, would suffice to please God; only the lamb slain, type of "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world," whom we find named in Rev. xiii. 8. From the time of the first sin men were taught that if they were to be saved from it, it would cost the price of blood. This was the Gospel before the Flood.

And if Belief in what God said, was the first "righteousness," Doubt, introduced by the devil, was the first sin. "Yea, *hath* God said?" were the words of the serpent. The belief God asked of the first men was in a *future* sacrifice, as of us it is required in one that is *past*. Men before the Flood could not know of Jesus Christ, a Saviour suffering death for sinners, as we know Him, but they had a knowledge of God's names, as *Elohim*, God of Gods, and Jehovah Elohim, "Lord God." The plural word, Gods, (Elohim,) is used alone in the story of

Digitized by Google

the creation of the world, narrated in the first chapter of Genesis; but from the third verse of the second chapter, Jehovah Elohim, "LORD GOD," is employed in reference to Divine communication with the human pair. In the whole conversation of the serpent in the third chapter, only the first name, GOD, is again used, and by Eve also; but the after judgment of the culprits is by the "LORD GOD," the Jehovah Elohim. Jehovah was the visible manifestation to man of Elohim, the Uncreated, the Self-existent, the Unseen, and Eternal. The Book of Job brings down to us the beliefs of the patriarchal age on this head. "Behold, God is great," says Elihu, "and we know not, neither can search out the number of his years." (xxxvi. 26.) And the LORD, the JEHOVAH, is represented as answering Job Himself out of the whirlwind:—

"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said . . . . Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . . Who hath laid the measures thereof, ... or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (xxxviii. 1—7.)

In the first chapter of St. John's Gospel this eternal existence is said to be that of the Word:—

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

The same Divine Being had been described more than a thousand years before the time of St. John, as it is supposed, by Solomon, in the 8th chapter of Proverbs, under the name of "Wisdom." Of Him it is said,—

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the

Digitized by Google

beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the heavens, I was there.....when he established the clouds above.....when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."

Here is Divine history, given independently of Moses, concerning the days of Adam and his *holy* descendants; Moses verifies it in the 90th Psalm, which is ascribed to him:—

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

Adam had been made, we must remember, in the image of God. What a glorious likeness! We are told in Col. i. 15, that the image of the invisible God is His dear Son, "the firstborn of every creature, who is before all things." Adam, fallen from the perfect likeness of Jehovah, must yet have retained much of the God-like in his human character; he was not left without God and without hope in the world; and though the image was defaced, he must surely have been a preacher of righteousness like Noah—of the righteousness of believing in God.

Adam is not mentioned in Genesis, and Noah is not mentioned, after the fall of each under the dominion of sin; but Adam must have had a law given him; and a race sprang from him after his wicked Cain and his murdered Abel, who sought to live by the law. Noah is spoken of as a just man. To be just is to live by a law; and the violence and corruption which speedily overspread the earth was the constant breaking of that law: man set up his own will against God's will.

The Destroyer had entered Paradise, and taught

Digitized by Google

men to question the truth and justice of God, as they do to this day.

Yet Adam had some children who walked with God, while others walked with the devil. Enoch followed Abel ere long into the unveiled presence of Jehovah through faith in the blood, being the first example of "one taken and another left."

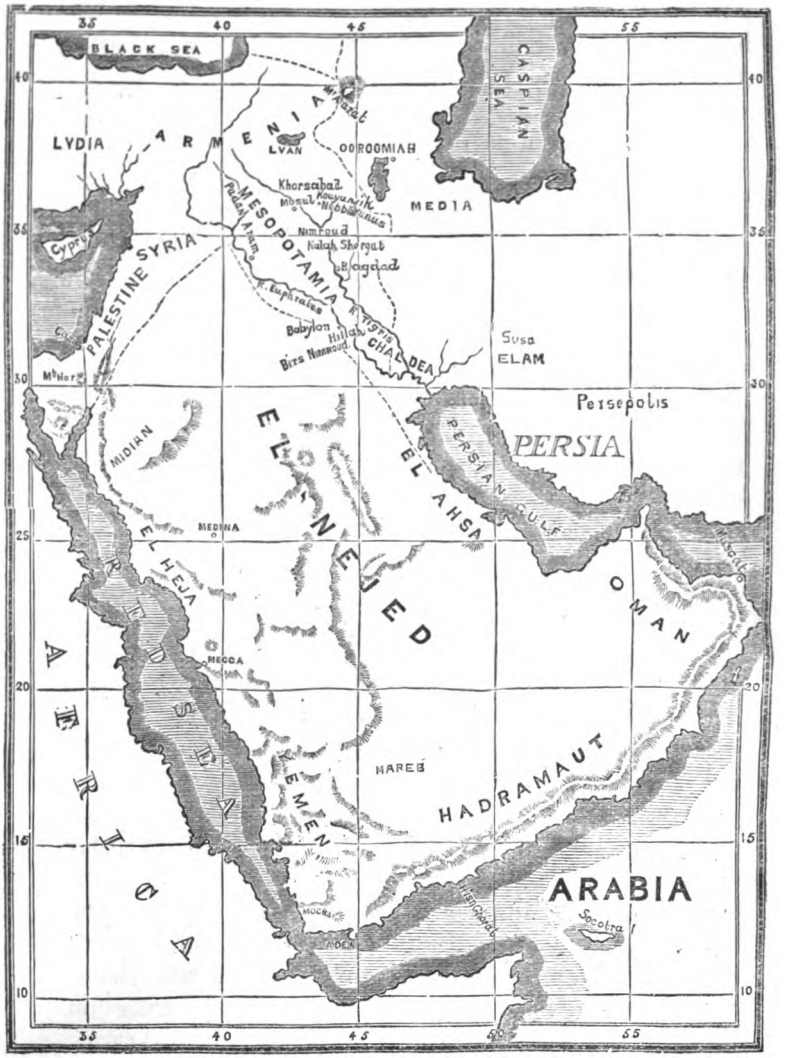
The Divine Word had given these two, though born in sin, "power to become the sons of God." Adam had eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and how he must have mourned when he saw that the words and deeds of most of his children were only evil, and that continually,—and mark how the short, sad tale goes on.

"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and it grieved him at his heart that he had made man, and the Lord said, I will destroy both man and beast, for it repenteth me that I have made them."

Before this resolve was executed, God must have called to Himself every soul that served and loved Him. The rest, as our Saviour while upon earth told His disciples, (Matt. xvii. 25), went on eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage; and it was not holy marriage like that in Eden. "They took them wives of all which they chose," till the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all.

If Methuselah, Enoch's son in Seth's holy line, loved the Lord as he surely did, he was the last who loved and trusted God besides Noah and his family. He doubtless died a natural death, having lived longer than any man before him, and then the prophecy uttered in his name, "Methuselah," was fulfilled. "He dies, and it is sent." Noah alone, with his sons and their wives for his sake, "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." By express Divine

Digitized by Google



ARMENIA, MESOPOTAMIA, PALESTINE, AND ARABIA.

Digitized by Google

command He prepared an ark for the saving of his house. St. Paul fills up his history for us. (Heb. xi. 7.)

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Dear friends, we can give you in this first number of our "LEAVES," no picture of the mountains, or the cities, or the temples of that old world; nothing but Mount Ararat—the bridge between the old world and the new,*—and a MAP of its position.

Let us look back at its picture, and think how long that peak must have battled with the stormy surges, and seen the last sun of the old world sink beneath those billows mountain-high; till at last itself also was blotted from the landscape. That loftiest peak, too, must have first emerged from the waters as they went down. If you could attain its summit, you might now look forth on *four* broad seas—the BLACK SEA, the CASPIAN SEA, the MEDITERRANEAN SEA, and the PERSIAN GULF. Moses makes no mention of these in his narrative, but he does of the Rivers TIGRIS and EUPHRATES, which you will find also marked here. *They* are said to have had their source in EDEN, therefore the place of the Garden of Paradise cannot have been far distant.

Our picture represents a plain, the plain of the Araxes, which is itself 3000 feet above the level of the sea. From this plain the summits of the ARMENIAN highlands rise 7000 feet higher, bearing on their mighty shoulders the greater and lesser Ararat, the greater cone being 7000 feet higher still.

* "And the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat."—Gen. viii. 4.

Digitized by Google

If you stood in the outskirts of the city of Nakchevan (meaning *place of descent*), of which some buildings are seen in the picture, you could look across that wide low valley of the Araxes and see Mount Ararat from base to summit at the distance of 100 miles. If you beheld it at early dawn, rising 14,000 feet from the plain, the ice-clad cone would be silvered with the light of day, while the purple of night yet enfolded it below. The sun's first rays begin to crown it with gold, and then spread downwards towards its foundations.

We are not told that the ark of Noah rested on the steepest summit of Ararat, and to ascend this was believed by the Armenians who dwell around it to be supernaturally forbidden till, in 1829, Professor Parrot, a German, under Russian auspices, after two failures, at last gained a footing on the brow of eternal ice, unbroken by rock or stone; he found it a slightly convex surface, about 200 paces in circuit, declining steeply on all sides. The ark could not certainly have rested there.

The Professor looked down upon the lesser Ararat 4000 feet lower, whose head, as viewed from this higher point, did not appear like a cone, but like the top of a square pyramid with larger and smaller forms rising up at the edges and in the middle, so that it looked somewhat like a Druidical circle with its central object; and this is a curious fact when compared with the notion which many entertain, that the ark did in fact rest on the lesser Ararat; as it is not easy to see how its inmates, including heavy cattle, could possibly have descended from the highest cone.

Nothing is said about the shape of the ark in Scripture, but its size is given, "300 cubits in length, 50 in breadth, and 30 in height." The

Digitized by Google

cubit is supposed to be the measure from a man's elbow to the tip of his forefinger; or about 21 inches. If so, Noah's ark would be 525 feet long, 87 feet broad, and 52 feet high. This is *very much* larger than the largest British man-of-war. SOLOMON'S TEMPLE in 1 Kings vi. 2, was the same height as the ARK, but only one fifth of the length, and less than one half the width.

This huge structure was only intended *to float* on the water, and had neither mast, sail, nor rudder. It was an enormous floating house, "kept safe by the power of God"; built so that it should ride steadily, and afford ample room for stowage. It was divided into a number of "nests," or small compartments, arranged in three tiers, one above another, "lower, second, and third stories"; and had, it has been supposed, a line of narrow sky-lights running its whole length at the top, for which some transparent substance must have been used to prevent the entrance of the rain. The "window" Noah opened, may have been a small compartment of the large one.

The long-suffering of God had waited 120 years while the ark was preparing, (1 Peter iii. 20), and then Noah and his family, with all the animals who were to be saved, in their various allotted numbers, entered by the door, which was placed in the side of the ark—a process which occupied seven days—and "God shut them in," and the rest of the human race were left to perish in their unbelief; they "knew not till the flood came and took them all away."

Our Saviour, when upon earth, declares this; and the Apostles Paul and Peter witness to it. The Lord God doeth as He will among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth." The

Digitized by Google

architects of that old world, its builders of cities, its shepherds and owners of vast flocks and herds, its mighty masters of music and song, and its artificers in metals, its kings and princes and its working people—men, women, and children—all sank in the waters. Their death-struggles, and their cries of despair, are not described; nor the frantic partings, not even NOAH'S grief at the judgment which he and his alone escaped. The 7th chapter of Genesis closes only with the announcement of the entire extinction of all animal life, in the world before the Flood.

"And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days."

Thus ends the story of the *first seven chapters of our Bible.*

And there stand out in this story several events which are different to those to which we are accustomed in the "latter days" in which *we* live.

There is the creation of Adam and Eve as full and perfect beings who knew no infancy.

There is the translation of Enoch from earth to heaven, who knew no death.

There is the long life of the patriarchal races and the years of the world's age to be counted by their means: and the fact that *seven* lives of people who

Digitized by Google

may have seen and talked with each other, extended from Adam to Moses, 2520 years.

There is a positive and actual intercourse carried on between heaven and earth. "God spake," and man replied, and yet men in general did not believe in God; the gifts of their long life and gigantic strength had only been used by them for purposes of violence and corruption; there was a vast *one-ness* amongst them in that day, like the union we desire so much in modern days, but it was a *one-ness against God.* They bade Him depart from them, and He said, "My spirit shall no longer strive with man." After ages of mercy and forbearance He swept them to destruction—and swept away too the Garden of Eden, so utterly, that its particular site should not be remembered. *At its gate had stood the unearthly Cherubim,* and those signs of His Presence, when the earth rose again from the waters appear to have been *withdrawn.* Noah must have *heard* all particulars of what he had not *seen* from his grandfather, Methuselah, with whom he lived 600 years, and Shem, the great-grandson of the family, would have listened to the narrations which Methuselah could have had direct from Adam, and would have laid them up in *his* memory for the information of those who should live 500 years after the Flood.

And what does the Apostle Peter tell us in reference to these Times before the Flood, which some think such an old world tale that it can be of no consequence for us to hear it?

He mentions it 2400 years after it happened, and after the death of Jesus on the Cross and His ascension to heaven, leaving a promise to His disciples

Digitized by Google

that He would come again. He mentions it to arrest the attention of scoffers, who said—

"Where is the promise of His coming?"

So Peter answers them by reference to Noah's flood, "whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished."

What does he say, so long afterwards?

"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

And what is the Apostle's inference?

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" and "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (2 Peter iii. 11, 14.)

To be blameless we must be clothed in the robe of Christ's righteousness, and not our own.

We should notice St. Peter's last injunction to the Christians of his day—

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen." (2 Peter iii. 17, 18.)

N.B.—Our *Second* Number of the LEAVES FROM THE BOOK AND ITS STORY, will tell you of the *Second* Age before the Bible—The Space between the Flood and Abraham.

Our *Third* Number—Of the Space between Abraham and Moses.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



TEMPLE OF ANCIENT NINEVEH (RESTORED AFTER LAYARD).

Digitized by Google

THE TIMES BEFORE OUR BIBLE WAS WRITTEN.

No. II.

THE story of the Times between the Flood and Abram's call by God, to be "the Father of a great Nation," begins with the 8th chapter of Genesis, and ends at the 5th verse of the 12th chapter.

Our time-table in LEAVES No. I. will shew you that Abram was born 352 years after the Deluge, and he was called of God out of Haran when he was seventy-five years old. 352 and seventy-five make 427 years—a space of time almost equal to the 430 years which followed—from Abram's call to the deliverance of his children from their bondage in Egypt, by the hand of Moses. Paul tells us of *that* 430 years in his Epistle to the Galatians, iii. 17.

"The law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot make the promise (to Abraham and his seed) of none effect."

We shall always give you in these LEAVES the passages from the Gospels and Epistles in the New Testament, which are the surest explanation of Old Testament history, for they are not the words of Matthew, or Luke, Peter, Paul, or John, merely; they are the utterance of the Holy Ghost Himself, through those inspired men, on the subjects which we wish to understand.

Now we will enquire what were the chief events of the first-named 427 years.

The Covenant of God with Noah.

The rapid re-peopling of the earth.

Digitized by Google

The founding of the Tower of Babel, and the Confusion of tongues.

The rise of the Chaldean and Egyptian empires.

The beginning of Idolatry.

The coming forth of Terah, Abram's father, from "Ur of the Chaldees," to go into the land of Canaan.

The new chapter of human history opens with the remarkable words "And GOD remembered NOAH," and bade him go forth from the ark; and ere its close we find that NOAH remembered GOD, and builded an altar (the first that is mentioned in Scripture) and offered burnt offerings upon it, from which it is said the Lord "smelled a sweet savour, or a savour of rest"—perhaps of rest from His "strange work" of judgment—and declared that He would not again smite anymore everything living as He had done.

The smelling of a sweet savour in Noah's sacrifice —had also respect to his faith in Christ. Nothing else could have pleased God—who condescends at this period to make a fresh Covenant with men, of free and eternal promise; and says—

"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth." (Gen. ix. 13.)

The bright and beautiful rainbow is a sign in heaven which surely still binds *us* and the men of Noah's age together, reminding us what God *can do* to destroy His enemies, and what He *will not* again do by His own promise. May not the judgment of the Deluge itself have arisen from the longing of Jehovah to redeem the world from its rule of iniquity, and restore to it a race to whom He might *anew* reveal Himself in love and mercy? "The history of the Christ of God does not begin with His birth in Bethlehem," says a Christian Jew.

Digitized by Google

"His goings forth are from of old; and the Gospel histories of Him are like a high table-land, to which we cannot be spared the *ascent*, from Genesis to Malachi;" for was He not "the LORD GOD of Shem," of whom Noah spoke after he came forth from the ark; who repeated the blessing of Adam and Eve to Noah and his household, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth?" and who gave a-fresh to man, dominion over the animal creation, fish, flesh, and fowl; and now ordained *meat* for his own sustenance as well as every herb and fruit permitted to him in the former world?

Again it is declared that God made man in His own image, and that therefore His blood must not be shed except by the hand of justice, which marks the first institution of something like the magistrate's office. Thus a law was given with emphasis against murder, and against eating blood for food; the latter injunction being observed by the posterity of children of Israel at the present day.

As the waters had gradually receded, how those preserved in the ark must have gazed downwards from their mountain height to retrace, if possible, any features of the former seats of habitation. The Garden of Eden had been situated in the neighbourhood of four rivers, and two of these are recognized by their old names after the Flood,—the Euphrates and the Tigris. You will find them on the map in Tract No. I. The highlands of Armenia, which encircle Mount Ararat, were well adapted to be the central spot whence the new race of men should pour forth on all sides of the world. Around the Four Seas they made their earliest settlements, and these became the high roads of trade and travel; but we do not hear anything of Noah's own migration.

Digitized by Google

As the devil had glided in the form of a serpent into Eden, so neither was he absent in his wicked influence at the descent of the patriarch and his sons from Ararat. The soil of Armenia is still most favourable for the cultivation of the vine, and here Noah planted a vineyard; and the tempter again presented fruit (as to Eve, but this time it was the grape, in intoxicating form) to the venerable father, and then he stirred the spirit of his son Ham to earn his curse. Noah's influence must have been weakened by this inconsistency, and over that one of his descendants who needed it the most. But it does not seem that God withdrew from him the spirit of prophecy, for his blessing and his curse upon his three sons has proved to be a short but faithful sketch of the history of the nations and of the kingdom of God in the earth.

The *curse* is *first* delivered, and on HAM, through his youngest son, Canaan; Ham's own name meant "swarthy," Shem's, "renown," and Japheth's, "he that extends."—Thus ran the patriarch's prophecy:—

"Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants (or the meanest of servants) shall he be unto his brethren.

"Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

"God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

The 10th chapter of Genesis, 21st verse, tells us that Japheth was the elder son; chapter xi. 10 says, that Shem was one hundred years old, two years after the Deluge, therefore ninety-eight when it began. Noah's age was then six hundred years, and by Gen. v. 32, *one* of his sons was then a hundred years old. So the genealogy rightly begins with Japheth, and by him and his were the "isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands." The Shemites were to receive the law of the Lord, and

Digitized by Google

to preserve it for the world. Shem's filial love had rescued his father Noah from reproach and contempt; he had remembered the natural law of honour due to parents; and Japheth, who shared in his deed, was to be enlarged and spread abroad. *His* descendants govern Europe and America, and even a portion of Asia. He was to enjoy the privileges, and even to "dwell in the tents" of Shem till the grand prophecy in the 11th of Romans, comes to be fulfilled.

The 10th of Genesis is a wonderful chapter. It contains a precious old document, called the TOLDOTH BENI NOAH, "The book of the generations of the sons of Noah," and the more light that modern research and travel bring to bear upon the state of countries, nations, and languages, the more it is shown how true is the Scripture in its few but important details of history, chronology, and geography; and how true in comparison with the confused and uncertain traditions of other nations.

For some considerable time after coming out of the ark, men are declared to have spoken one language, but this does not imply that they all dwelt together. The experience of the Deluge alone would have taught them to make a high road of the waters very early. There can be no doubt as to HAM'S *own* dwelling-place, as the tabernacles of Ham, and "the land of Ham" are, in Ps. lxxviii., and Ps. cv., names given to EGYPT—a country which lies in reference to the map we have given you, on the left side of the Red Sea.* Ham, like Cain before the Flood, may be well imagined to have gone from his father's presence during his lifetime.

The children of Shem and Japheth, and the great body of their offspring *may* have "journeyed from the East and found a plain in the land of Shinar;"

* Egypt should be looked for on a map of Africa.

Digitized by Google

but to this nursery of the primeval kingdoms, the land of Shinar, it is certain that there came also Nimrod, the grandson of Ham.

"He began to be a mighty one in the earth. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."

Nimrod is remembered to this day, in that very place, as among the foremost men of the old world, "a mighty hunter"; in him God's promise seems fulfilled:—

"And the fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth."

He is probably the Ninus of whom we read in profane history as the founder of Nineveh. "A mighty hunter" was needed, as the destruction of lions in this reedy and marshy district would seem to have been important, before its occupation by man. Chaldea was a country entirely destitute of stone, and even its wood was scarce and of bad quality, being only that of palm trees, which fringed the rivers; but its early colonists contrived with their *excellent clay*, to raise vast structures which must have provoked comparison with the pyramids of Egypt. "They said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar."

The children of Ham, from Cush, his noblest son, who peopled Abyssinia, to Canaan his most degraded descendant, who gave his name to that country, afterwards called Palestine, had all surely heard of the *curse* of Noah, that servitude should be the lot of the Hamites; and also of the corresponding blessing on Shem and Japheth. To all the sons was foretold a vast and speedy increase of their race, so that the earth might be replenished with population. They seem to have had a fear of being

Digitized by Google

scattered abroad on the face of the earth; and as the name of Nimrod signifies, "we will rebel," it appears they resolved to resist *both* prophecies, to which end, perhaps, in the time of Peleg, the son of Eber, "in whose days the earth was divided," those who settled in Chaldea designed the tower of Babel, "whose top, they said, may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

The Hebrew or Shemite name of "Babel" means "confusion," but in the Hamite language Babel meant "gate of God." The Chaldeans, early and late, have always been famous for their study of the heavenly bodies, shining so brightly over their vast plains in the clear still sky. And one purpose they had in building this tower may have been to observe the stars, but its chief end was, *their own glory*, and the resistance of the curse, and nevertheless "it is written"

"The LORD did there confound the language of all the earth, and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad, upon the face of all the earth,"

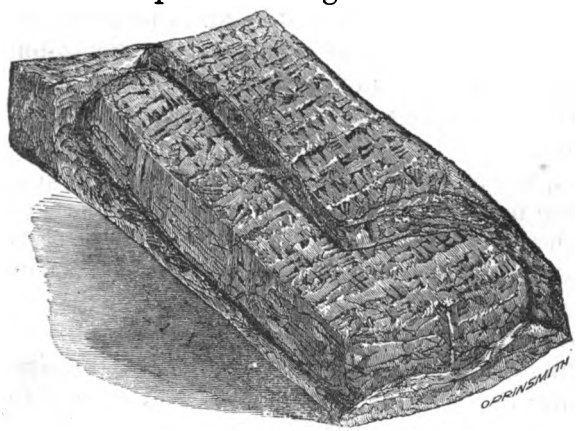
by an interference from heaven, as marked in its measure as the FLOOD had been a hundred years or more before.

The Scripture says, that the people built a city *and* a tower, and the Birs Nimrud, at Borsip-pa, is most often thought to represent the place of the Tower, which was by no means necessarily *within* the *city* of Babylon.

The Tower is believed to have been rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar in seven stages, more than 1600 years afterwards. He called it "The Temple of the Seven Spheres." It was a sort of pyramid, whose main top is yet 150 feet high, and whose base, still buried in sand and rubbish, measures a circle of 2000 feet.

Digitized by Google

The seven stages of this building were brightly colored, the basement stage being black, the second orange, the third bright red, the fourth golden, the fifth pale yellow, the sixth dark blue, and the seventh silver. Nebuchadnezzar, in describing his temples and palaces, often speaks of them as "clothed with gold." When the setting sun lit up this tower in its glory, with the gorgeous light of an Eastern sky, what a vision it must have been! That this ruin has endured when all else around it has crumbled, is thought to be owing to the clay turned into glass of the sixth layer—converted by intense heat into an imperishable mass of blue slag, which has crowned and kept the rest together.



A CLAY TABLET AND ITS ENVELOPE.

M. Oppert, a French Jew, to whom France gives great honour as a reader of the now dead languages of Nineveh and Babylon,—has a most remarkable notice concerning the tower of the Birs Nimrud. The French expedition to Mesopotamia found among the ruins *a clay cake*, dated from Borsip, the 30th day of the sixth month of the sixteenth year of Nabonid. And this clay cake, if M. Oppert's read-

Digitized by Google

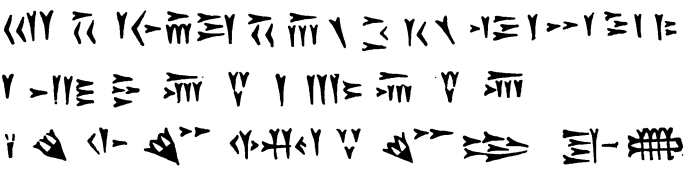
ing be true, declares that this building was raised on the very basement of the Old Tower of Babel.

The Babylonian name Borsip, he says, means "THE TOWER OF THE TONGUES," and thus he reads the tablet.

"Nebuchodonesor, king of Babylon, shepherd of peoples, the wise man who lends his ears to the orders of the highest God; . . . the repairer of the Pyramid and the Tower." . . .

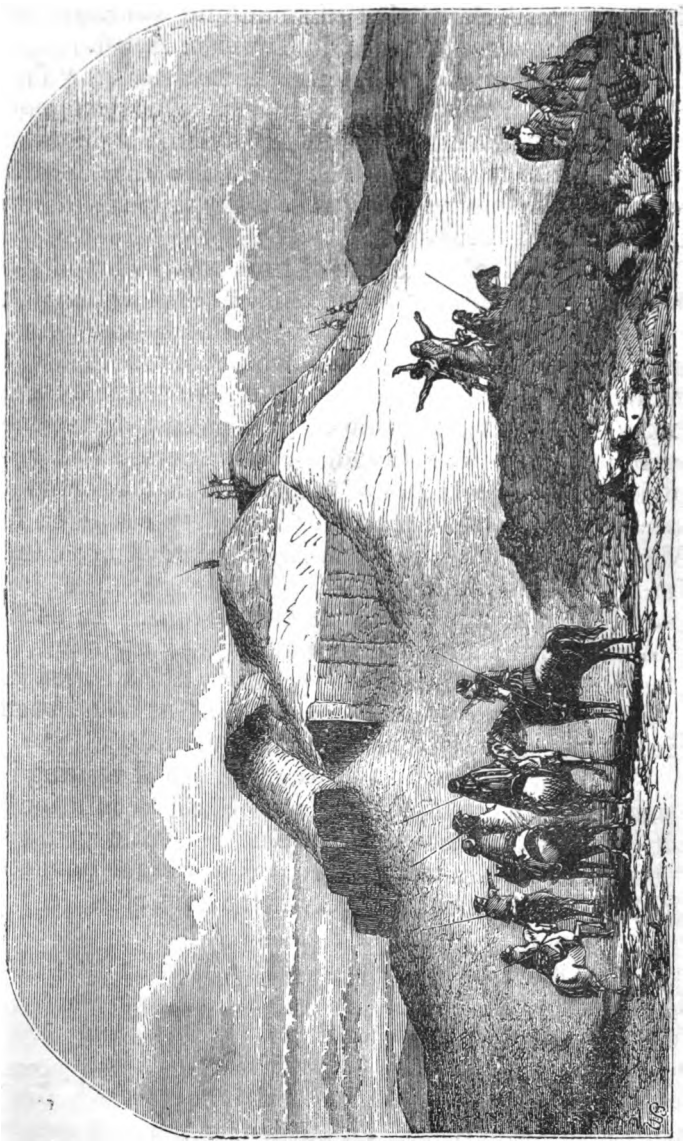
"This edifice, the house of the seven lights of the earth, is the most ancient monument of Borsippa: A former king built it (they reckon forty-two ages), but he did not complete its head. SINCE A REMOTE TIME PEOPLE HAD ABANDONED IT, WITHOUT ORDER EXPRESSING THEIR WORDS. Since that time, the earthquake and the thunder had dispersed its sun-dried clay; the bricks of the casing had been split and the earth of the interior had been scattered in heaps. Merodach, the great lord, excited my mind to repair this building. I did not change the site, nor did I take away the foundation-stone. In a fortunate month, an auspicious day, I set my hand to finish it, and to exalt its head. As it had been in former times, so I founded, I made it; as it had been in ancient days, so I exalted its summit."

We cannot tell you that this wonderful reading is *undoubtedly* correct, for if there be still "confusion" in anything, it is amongst the readers of the "cuneiform" or arrowheaded languages of the monuments of Mesopotamia, which are written thus:



THE NAME OF XERXES IN CUNEIFORM. 1. PERSIAN. 2. MEDIAN. 3. ASSYRIAN.

Digitized by Google



THE TEMPLE OF MUGHYER OR UR.

Digitized by Google

But one thing is certain, that ancient remains of buildings in those lands exactly verify the descriptions of the Bible. Their temples were erected on solid masses of brickwork, ascended by steps faced with marble, and consisted of a house or chamber highly ornamented, containing an image or shrine.

The inner mass of bricks was often composed of the sun-dried squares of clay which they use in Persia even to this day (adding a new chamber to their houses within a week, as the arrival of a guest may require it). This sun-dried mass was faced with kiln dried bricks of small size "burned thoroughly" and laid in bitumen. The name "Mugeyer" means "mother of bitumen." The remains of the temple of Mugeyer we present to you on the opposite page, whose *foundations* are considered to have been laid in Chaldea even before the time of Abraham, in the district inhabited by his father, Terah, "Ur of the Chaldees." See Gen. xi. 31.



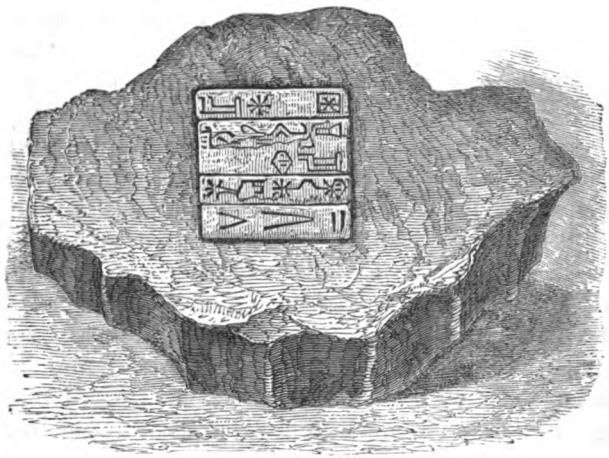
CYLINDER OF NABONIDUS, B.C. 555.

In 1854, while excavating this most ancient temple, four cylinders were found inserted at each corner of the upper story—in a niche formed by the omission of a brick. The writing on them tells that this was the Great Temple of the Moon, at Hur, repaired by Nabonidus, the father of Belshazzar, (in an age not far distant from that in which Nebuchadnezzar repaired the Birs Nimrud).

The square bricks of the ancient *foundation*, however, are stamped with certain characters, which Sir Henry Rawlinson reads as Urukh, the first known monarch after Nimrod, and the first of whom any relics have been obtained. His bricks are of coarse and rude make, and often ill-fitted together. His substitute for lime mortar is moist mud or bitumen.

Digitized by Google

The edges of the specimen brick here given have been broken.



ONE OF URUKH'S BRICKS.

The language of this brick is Hamitic, and it is deciphered as follows:—

"THE SIGNET OF ORCHAMUS OR URUKH, THE PIOUS CHIEF, KING OF UR."

It is as a builder of gigantic works that URUKH is known to us. The basements of his temples are of an enormous size. It is calculated that thirty millions of square bricks have been used in one of them, and it is evident, from the size and number of this king's works, that he had the command of a large amount of human labour. His buildings are carefully placed with their corners pointing North, South, East, and West, and are dedicated to the Sun or Moon, or to Nimrod. Men had begun by that time to worship the heavenly bodies. The learned who believe they read the Hamitic characters place the reign of Urukh at about 2093 before Christ, or 255 years after the flood. This would be in the time of Terah, Abraham's father.

Digitized by Google

The great hunter Nimrod, and the great builder Urukh, perhaps the Arioch of the Bible, and the great conqueror Chedorlaomer (see Gen. xiv. 1) are the great men you must remember of the first Hamite kingdom. In Urukh's bricks, he also calls himself "king of Accad." (See Genesis x. 10.) The simple statement of the Bible that Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, had the beginning of his kingdom in Babel, is now confirmed by these clay proofs long reserved in the library of the earth for the people of this century to read, who have such peculiar need to hold fast their faith in the inspiration and *accuracy* of the Hebrew Scriptures.

If you ask what is the use of writing about old temples and bricks to Bible-women and Working men, we answer, such relics concern them quite as much as the learned, for this reason, they can go and see these old bricks and remains in the British Museum, and they will fix their attention on a time which we want them to realize in Bible history, the time of the beginning of the first recorded idolatries.

Terah is mentioned as an idolator, in the Book of Joshua (xxiv. 2), where Joshua reminds Israel.—

"Thus saith the Lord God, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (the Euphrates) in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and they served other gods."

Let us examine what other gods they served. They must have been the gods of Chaldea. The old stamped bricks of Urukh, and the foundation of his temples lately traced, tell of the solid grandeur of Hamitic intentions. The early history of the chief Hamite nations, shews great power to organize wide kingdoms, to acquire worldly greatness, and to check the inroads of wandering tribes. Among the sons of Ham are found the earliest idolators after the Flood; and whether in Egypt or in Chaldea we

Digitized by Google

find similar ideas. Idolatry was the departure of man from God, and its sources were threefold.

I. Men forgot that their Creator was greater than the works of His hands, so they worshipped first the Heavenly Bodies; from which sin of his early time, JOB says, *he* had been kept. See Job xxxi. 26—28:—

"If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness;

"And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand. . . . I should have denied the God that is above."

II. They made gods of their fathers, grandfathers, and early kings; and, in Egypt, the children of Ham made offerings to the sun, and named their kings after him: Pharoah from Phra, the sun.

The worship of NOAH was, both in EGYPT and in CHALDEA, strangely united with the worship of the sun. Osiris, the Egyptian sun-god, was a deification of Noah, and he entered into the ark which was symbolized by the crescent moon. Noah was worshipped at "populous No," or Thebes, named from Theba, the ark; in Chaldea he was worshipped at "Erech," or "the place of the ark," as "Anu," or "Ana," or "Oannes," or "Hoa." His most important titles are those which make him "the intelligent fish," the teacher of mankind, one of his emblems is the wedge, or *arrowhead*. Another is a *serpent*, a symbol of superhuman knowledge. The name of Hoa appears on a very ancient stone tablet brought from Mugeyer or Ur. He is represented as a god coming up out of the sea; and as one of the first of the gods, who brought the knowledge of



HOA, OR NOAH.

Digitized by Google

astronomy and letters to the settlers on the Euphrates and the Tigris.

The men of the first empire of Chaldea, which lasted till the time of Israel's exodus from Egypt, seem to have known how to engrave on stone. A famous traveller, Sir R. Ker Porter, has an engraving in his book of a signet cylinder, of king Urukh's; he once had the signet itself, but lost it. It had four figures clearly cut upon it; a patriarchal father seated on a chair, with the crescent moon over his head; a bridegroom apparently presents to him his bride and her attendant. The figures are as well cut as those of a much later date, and are dressed in flounced and fringed garments delicately striped, and indicating an advanced state of the arts of dress. Think of this as between two and three hundred years after the Deluge! Do you know of the "goodly Babylonish garment" which found its way into Palestine, and made Achan covet its rare beauty (see Josh. vii. 21)? it cost him his life to possess this and other forbidden treasures.

Now, let us look back at the picture of an Assyrian temple palace, which forms our frontispiece. There you see people in striped and flounced dresses—a king with a royal parasol held over him, which is the sign of sovereignty in the East; on the wall is sculptured a king in his war-chariot, like Nimrod hunting the lion; kings also with their great bow in the hand, receiving the homage of captives;—but what else do you see besides these figures of human beings?

Some creatures that are *not* human, with a man's face, and vast stony wings, and a lion's body and feet; also some figures with eagles' faces, and vast wings, and a man's body; and an object which is something like a Tree, and also like a gate.

Digitized by Google

What can we suppose these to be but memories carried away from Ararat, of the *Cherubim* at the gate of Eden, guarding the "Tree of Life."

III. Here was a third source of idolatry, besides the worship of the heavenly bodies, and the worship of ancestors, fathers, and grandfathers; the making graven images of the supposed forms of the cherubim mentioned in the 3rd chapter of Genesis.

But we now find our attention transferred from CHALDEA to NINEVEH, and must look back to Genesis x. 11.—

"Out of that land (of Shinar) went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh."

We find no Asshur among Ham's posterity, and yet this interruption occurs in the line of his descendants. It may have been Asshur, the uncle of Nimrod; for the sons of Shem were all his uncles; or, it may be as the Margin reads: "Out of that land he (Nimrod) went forth into Asshur (Assyria) and builded Nineveh." Assyria is the *upper* portion of the Mesopotamian valley, and Chaldea the *lower*, which had Babel for its capital. Both countries compose the tract between the Tigris and Euphrates, or Mesopotamia, which means "the between river country." The Assyrians are always believed to be a Semitic race, not the chosen seed, but still Shem's seed. The men of Assyria grew into great warriors. Sometimes the Chaldeans prevailed, sometimes the Assyrians. At that early time they shared in the same religious ideas, and these old stones from Assyria now bring us proof that the sons of Shem, and Ham also, confided to their children the relics of patriarchal truth, by whose sinful hearts and hands it was soon corrupted and obscured.

There will be much more to say about these images when we arrive at a certain point in the

Digitized by Google

history of the nation of Israel; but in the presence of these heathen symbols of a most ancient idolatry, it is impossible for a thoughtful observer to avoid asking one question, WHY HAVE THESE BEEN BURIED OUT OF SIGHT IN THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD FOR TWICE TWELVE HUNDRED YEARS, AND WHY ARE THEY RESTORED AT THE END OF SUCH A PERIOD? for it is scarcely thirty years ago since Austen Layard, an English traveller, discovered them in the mounds of Nineveh, and sent them home to take a place in the halls of the British Museum.*

Is it not plain, that their importance consists in their being *heathen likenesses* of the Cherubic forms, which God had chosen as attendants on His own appearances to man, and which He willed *forgotten.*

We should have have had no clue to the meaning of these mysterious stony forms, but for the allusions and descriptions of the Jewish prophets. Ezekiel, in the first and the tenth chapters of his prophecy, describes living creatures "uniting the form of a man, a lion, and an eagle." He saw them in a vision, "and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above"; and he says, "I knew that they were the cherubim." (Ezek. x. 20.)

We cannot doubt that tradition, long after the Fall, described the Eden cherubim, by which the god of this world reaped a harvest in a variety of idols; as all ancient heathen worship proves.

There was one idea that Jehovah always impressed on the minds of the men that loved and feared Him; that of His own PRESENCE with them. They were to act as in the sight of God. They were to ask counsel of Him; and He answered them; His presence was always with them. It was afterwards

* The Museum is open *free* to all, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, from 10 o'clock till dusk.

Digitized by Google

visibly manifested to Moses and Aaron, from amid the bright glory which rested over the ARK between *its* cherubim; and as at the gate of Eden we find "cherubim," and a sword-like flame "that turned everyway," (probably between them), we may fairly conclude that these *accompanied* the "presence of the Lord" from which Cain complained of being shut out: "and from thy face I shall be hid." (See Gen. iv. 14.) From this presence probably issued the voice which had pronounced his doom.

To this "presence" belonged worship and sacrifice, and it is a very remarkable thing that, when the children of Asshur attempted to record the story of the past in stone, *they carved as the only object to be worshipped* a symbol of the presence, *not of God*, but of their father, Asshur. They expressed the idea by a winged human figure rising out of a circle. Paganism is only a corruption of patriarchal worship. "Asshur," the supreme god of Assyria, had no shrine or temple of his own, a sign that his worship was universal, and that *all* temples were open to him. When the people had associated this symbol with him, they made it belong to KINGS in general.



ASSYRIAN EMBLEM OF THE PRESENCE OF ASSHUR.

It was their most sacred emblem. If the king is fighting in battle, Asshur, over his head, has his arrow on

Digitized by Google

the string; if he returns from victory, with his right hand upraised—so is the hand of Asshur—and the disused bow in his left; but most especially when the king *worships*, it is in this "presence," appearing over the emblem of the sacred tree, guarded by its attendant priests, who are represented as winged, and therefore heavenly beings. We regret that you do not, in Mr. Layard's temple picture, see this emblem of the "presence;" but it is given in the following outline of a grand sculpture on the wall, in the first Nineveh gallery of the British Museum.



THE KING OF NINEVEH WORSHIPPING IN THE PRESENCE OF ASSHUR.

Mr. Layard discovered that a slab, as for an altar or throne, with steps up to it, had been let into the wall beneath this sculpture, it had, however, been broken among the ruins.

In no other palace, he says, did he find the emblem of the Presence over the Sacred Tree, which abounded in that earliest temple; and he makes a very remarkable statement, that "on all the slabs forming entrances to it, were marks of a black fluid resembling blood, which appeared to have been daubed on the stone," and called to his mind at once the Hebrew

Digitized by Google

rite of sprinkling the blood of the Passover Lamb on the lintel of the doorway in Egypt. But was not the idea derived from sacrifices, still older than the time of Moses, the sacrifices of Noah and of Abel? In Assyria the winged priests or Genii, and the winged cherubic beasts, are all the varied multiplication of the same idea. They had all to do with "the Presence," which could not be entered without the offering of blood.

Thus of God's truth men made "a lie." Babel has been *from the beginning* what the Holy Ghost calls her by St. John, in the 17th chapter of the Revelation: "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

The story of these ancient times is *repeated* in the solemn words of the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Paul in the 1st chapter of his Epistle to the Romans:—

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened. . .

"And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness.

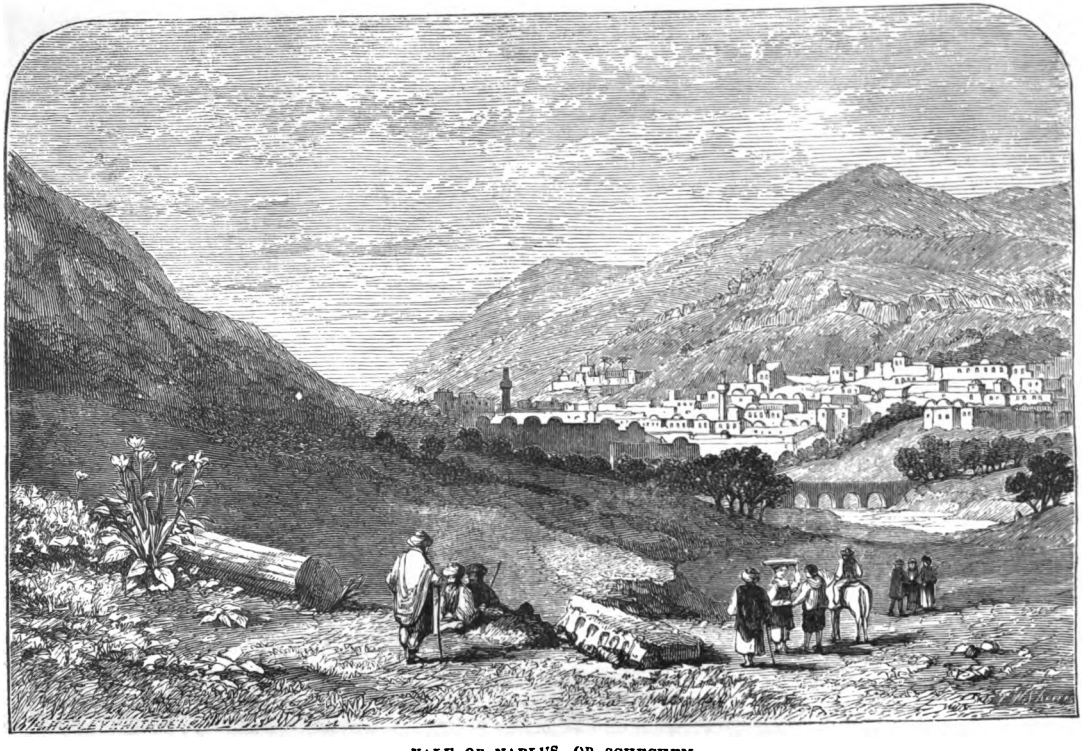
"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."

These curious STONE pictures have been surely given of God to England for no less a purpose than to draw the attention of those now living to the truth of past histories in HIS WRITTEN WORD. They are God's galleries of illustration to the first chapters of the world's history. The times of which Moses tells us *before the Bible was written.*

Bible-women and Sunday-school teachers should bring working men and women to behold how God fulfils and confirms His Word.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



VALE OF NABLUS, OR SCHECHEM.

Digitized by Google

THE TIMES BEFORE OUR BIBLE WAS WRITTEN.

THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM.

No. III.

THE life of Abraham, "the friend of God," is embraced in thirteen chapters of the book of Genesis, from the 12th to the 24th, inclusive of the 7 last verses of the 11th chapter, and the first 10 verses of the 25th.

Abraham was at first called "Abram," and the name of "Abram" means, "exalted father." As he is mentioned first in Terah's family, one would think that Abram was the eldest son—but that is *not* the case. Shem had been named before Japheth, and Abram is named before his brothers, on account of dignity. Terah died at the age of 205, when Abram was 75 years old; *therefore*, Abram must have been born when Terah was 130, because 130 and 75 make 205. Yet as Terah had a son when he was 70 (Gen. xi. 26), this son was most probably Haran—who died before his father left Ur of the Chaldees, and whose daughter, Milcah, became the wife of her later born uncle, Nahor. Abram's wife, Sarai, is by some supposed to be Iscah, but from Gen. xx. 12, she would appear to be the daughter of Terah by another wife, and therefore Abram's half-sister.

Abram was born 60 years after Haran, and perhaps Nahor between the two. The marriages

Digitized by Google

of near relatives appear at that period to have been permitted by God—though afterwards strictly regulated; while marriages with the sons or daughters of idolators seemed especially to have caused "grief of mind" in the patriarchal families, (Gen. xxvi. 35), who must have remembered the evil result of such alliance between the "sons of God," and the "daughters of men" in a former day.

Haran was probably a beloved son, and his name dear to his family, for it is given to the place where Terah first settled after leaving Ur.

In New Testament times,—a man, "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, called Stephen, gifted with miraculous powers, and speaking with irresistible wisdom (Acts vi. 10), and whose face was "like the face of an angel," tells his countrymen that "the God of glory" (the glory that the sons of God may have seen between the Eden cherubim), appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, *before* he dwelt in Harran. This place Harran, therefore, is *not* in Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia means "the between river country, between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates;" and there *is* a village named Harran, in the north of Mesopotamia, situated east of the Euphrates; but we have, we think, Bible proof that this is not the Haran to which Terah's household gave their family name.

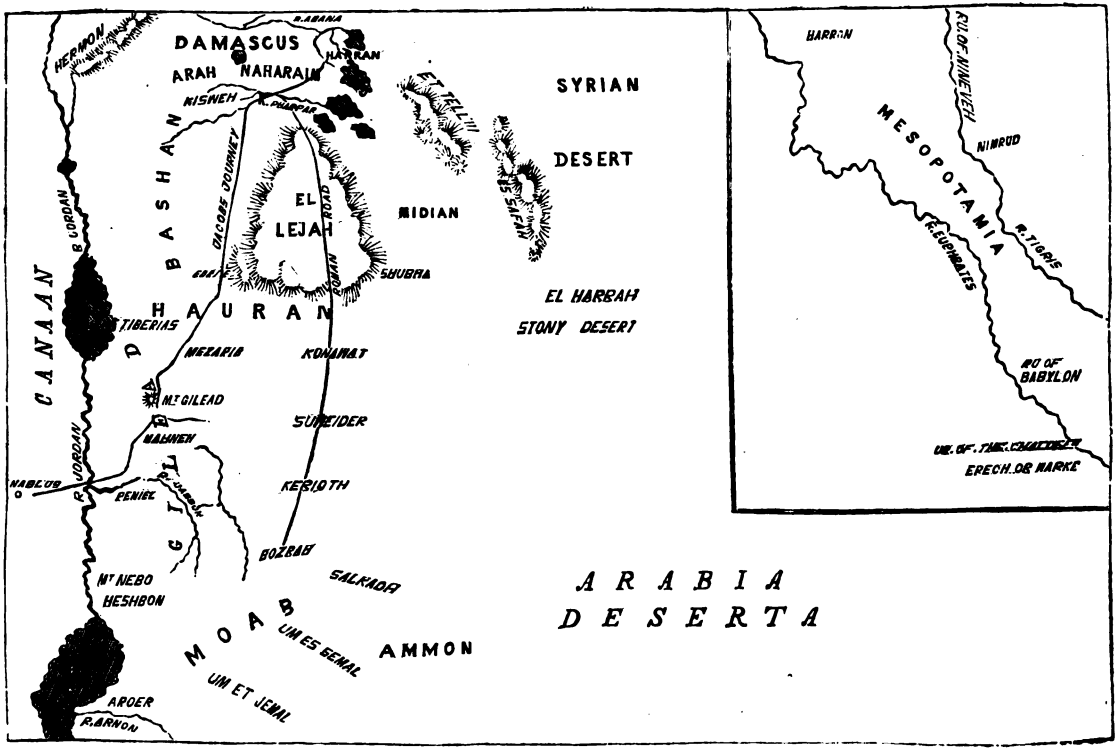
The Lord *had said* to Abram, "*Get thee out* of thy country, and from thy father's house, and *come unto* a land that I will shew thee;" which land is not there named. It is Stephen who tells us that this call came to him *in* Mesopotamia. Another passage or two helps us to ascertain whither he first went. It is of importance to fix on the *right* Haran, because one branch

Digitized by Google

of the family, Nahor and his descendants, remained there when Abram had gone forth again, and there is a district which *may*, it is thought, have derived its name from Nahor; it is first mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as "Aram-Nahar-aim" (Gen. xxiv. 10), which word ought not to have been translated by the Greek word, Mesopotamia, because this has alike confused the history, not only of Abraham, but that of Isaac and Jacob. Aram-Nahar-aim means "*high* land between rivers;" and these rivers, Dr. Beke, who has recently explored the district, considers for many reasons likely to have been the Scriptural Abana and Pharpar (or the Barada and Awaj), "rivers of Damascus."

We perceive that Abram *must* have lived *long* in Haran, and probably near Damascus, Josephus, the great historian of the Jews, repeats the tradition that he was *king* of Damascus. When he and Lot departed thence into Canaan, it was with "all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran (Gen. xii. 5), and when Lot two or three years after is taken prisoner by Chaldean and Persian kings, Abram arms his 318 trained servants "born in his house," and pursues the plunderers to Dan. After that, when in Gen. xv. God says to Abram, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward," the patriarch answers, "Lord God, to me thou hast given no seed, and lo, one born in mine house is mine heir." The previous verse explains that this is "the steward of his house, Eliezer of Damascus," who must have been from twenty to twenty-five years old, to have been placed in such a post of trust, and born at Damascus, which seems to verify the report of Josephus, and also implies that Terah left Chaldea a long while before his death.

Digitized by Google



EASTERN PALESTINE.

Digitized by Google

We are not told that Nahor, Terah's second son, came out of Chaldea to Syria, with his kindred; but he, or his, *came afterwards*, for his son Bethuel and his grandson Laban are both called Syrians (Gen. xxviii. 5), not *Ass*yrians.

Israel, as a people, are afterwards taught by Moses to say: "A Syrian ready to perish was my father"—which may refer to either Abram or Jacob, when, pressed by famine, they were driven to go down into the land of Egypt.

On the map given at page 14 you may observe Palestine (or Canaan) and Syria in their relation to Chaldea; but *on the present outline map*, on a somewhat larger scale, you may see Damascus, the most ancient and important city of Syria. It is perhaps the very oldest city in the world, still inhabited; and has a story that spreads over thousands of years. "It sits as when its rivers, Abana and Pharpar, were known to Naaman; as when it burst on the view of Saul of Tarsus, throned amid its gardens on the edge of the desert. The spot has never been desolate since Aram, the youngest son of Shem, arrived with his flocks from the Euphrates, and pitched his tents beside its crystal waters."

This map is to introduce you to the land of *Eastern* Palestine, which only of late years may be said to have been *re*-discovered by modern travellers. The district has been long hidden from the eyes of the Western nations; all access to its rocky hiding-places and old stone cities being forbidden by the Druses and the Arabs, the children of Moab and of Ishmael.

But we need this map now, to illustrate the *early* history of Abraham, and shall have often to refer to it again, while telling the story of his children. Its first use will be to show the migra-

Digitized by Google

tion of Abram and Lot, and their large households, from Haran to Sichem, and then to Bethel, on the other side of Jordan. "Unto Canaan they came, passing through the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh." The city of Sichem, perhaps, was not then in existence, but the oaks of Moreh were there, if the town as yet was not. In modern times Sichem is called Nablus, and has been visited by our Prince of Wales.

The word Moreh means "appearance of Jehovah;" and here, it is written, "the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said to him, To thy seed will I give this land;" and this although the Canaanite was yet in the land. (See Gen. xii. 6, 7.)

Abram builds an altar (of course for sacrifice), in remembrance of this Divine Appearance; and he also builds one at his next resting-place, Bethel, "calling upon the name of the Lord." To this altar he returns, after a journey into Egypt, and again he is enjoined to explore the country; next time he pitches his tents on the plains of Mamre or in Hebron; and once more he builds an altar. We are now made acquainted with Abram as indeed "an exalted father," lifted up into fellowship with Jehovah, whom it pleases in this man to elect a RACE, that shall witness for His name in the world. Abraham was to become "THE FRIEND OF GOD." The Arabs still know him by that name, "El-khalil-Allah;" the apostle James so calls him (James ii. 23). We find it written in Isaiah xli. 8; "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend"; and Jehoshaphat appeals to God (2 Chron. xx. 7), "Thou gavest this land to the seed of Abraham, thy friend for ever."

It is not for us to look to any quality in the

Digitized by Google

human creature that called forth this divine love; but what God had designed to be, in the manifestation of Himself to Adam in his innocent estate, it is evident He now of His own free grace, makes Himself to Abraham.

Tempted to doubt by the serpent,—Eve, and then Adam, had *not* believed God's Word to them, and had ventured to disobey His one Divine warning; but it is written (Gen. xv. 6), "Abram believed in the Lord, and He counted it unto him for righteousness." He had the simple faith of a little child in what God had said and done, and declared He meant to do. He distinguished "the God of glory" from all the inventions and devices of Chaldean imagination. He worshipped neither Noah nor Nimrod, and amid all the seductions and growing luxuries of his Hamitic neighbours, he gave his heart to "the most High God." He "reposed as a child in the strength of God (such is considered to be the force of the original Hebrew); and thus he became (Rom. iv. 11) "the father of all them that believe."

It is not told us how long before his 75th year Abram had actually obeyed God's command to come up out of Mesopotamia. He was to leave his kindred and his father's house—and he did leave his brother Nahor, and probably other relatives. But the migration is described as the father's, according to patriarchal custom; and no further revealing of God's will comes to the son till after the father's death. Then Abram sees a further separation commanded. "He departed as the Lord had spoken to him" from the Syrians, as before from the *Assyrians*; and sets forward with Lot for Canaan itself, the land beyond the Jordan,

Digitized by Google

and south of Syria, bordering on the Mediterranean Sea.

The promises of God to Abram, which *were seven times repeated*, extend over a period of certainly 50, and perhaps 75 years of his life, reckoning from the departure into Haran to the offering of Isaac. If, as Josephus says, the age of Isaac was about 25 at the time of the sacrifice, then Abram must have been 125. If also, as we have supposed, Eliezer of Damascus, Abram's steward, and born in his house, was scarcely less than 25 when Abram speaks of him as probably his only heir—the coming up from Mesopotamia must have preceded Eliezer's birth, and the first call of God must have come to Abram in Mesopotamia, when his own age was about 50.

We should endeavour to obtain a clear idea of the seven forms of the promise made to Abram.

If seven persons are studying the history together, they should be read, one after another, from the following chapters of Genesis.

The first being made in Mesopotamia—
Gen. chap. xii., vers. 1—3; Acts vii. 3.
The second at Sichem—
chap. xii., ver. 7.
The third at Bethel—
chap. xiii., vers. 14—17.
The fourth at Mamre, if not on Gerizim—
in the whole of chap. xv.
The fifth at Mamre—the same as Hebron—
chap. xvii., vers. 1—22.
The sixth at Mamre—
chap. xviii., vers. 17, 18, 19.
The seventh either on Mount Moriah or Mount Gerizim—
chap. xxii., vers. 15—18.

Digitized by Google

The first is a personal blessing on Abram himself; but it includes the promise,—

"In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

The second is short and specific,—

"To thy seed will I give this land."

The third makes the seed numberless, like the dust of the earth, and the gift of the land "FOR EVER."

The fourth reveals the personal heir, and compares the seed in number to the stars. At this time also is foretold their bondage of 400 years, and their future return to their land. And this fourth promise (in chap. xv.) defines the extent of the land—even from the Nile to the Euphrates.

At the time of the fifth promise (in chap. xvii.) Abram is called Abraham—not only "exalted father," but "father of many nations;" and *the Covenant is established*, concerning both the seed and the land, for ever; circumcision being its seal. Sarai becomes Sarah, or Princess, and is to be a "mother of kings." The promised heir is to be named Isaac; and the prayer for Ishmael is also heard.

(There are three promises that *he* shall be a great nation, unnumbered for multitude, and shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. The *three* promises concerning Ishmael are found in Genesis xvi. 10, 12; xvii. 20; xxi. 13—21.)

The sixth promise concerning Abraham is in chap. xviii. 17—19; and here the blessing on *all nations* for his sake is repeated; while God declares His knowledge of Abraham, that He will command his household after him.

The seventh sums up all the previous promises once more, and confirms them with an oath; and God swears by Himself, that as Abraham has not

Digitized by Google

withheld his only son at the Divine command, but "obeyed the voice of God," as the stars of heaven, and as the sand on the sea-shore, shall his seed be, possessing the gate of their enemies; and in them all nations shall be blessed. The promise of blessing to all nations is repeated *three* times.

At Sichem Abram receives his title deed to the Land of Canaan. It is a spot that the shifting scenes of many ages have made memorable. Probably as Jacob did afterwards, Abram descended to it from the heights of Gilead with his flocks, through the deep rent of the valley of the Jabbok, and advanced, after fording the Jordan, towards that wide and beautiful plain which has since been described as presenting one sea of golden grain, unbroken by hedge or bound.

The patriarch's face is set westward, and he leads his flocks and herds to enjoy the abundant rills and watercourses, and rest amid the grateful shade of Moreh's oaks and olives which lie between the ridges of Gerizim and Ebal.

All travellers naturally press towards the highest point in a landscape; and it is quite as probable that Abram built his altar on the mountain as in the plain. The heathen always "served their gods on the mountains and the hills (Deut. xii. 1—3); and where their altars were destroyed by God's command, the altars of the Lord of heaven and earth would be erected in their stead.

There were then but two abodes of settled life in Canaan—its oldest city, Arba (Hebron), the "city of the four giants;" the other, the circle of the five cities in the vale of the Jordan—Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar. The warlike Amorite chiefs, Mamre and his two brothers, were

Digitized by Google

camped along the mountain tops, and also the giant Rephaim.

The height of Gerizim above the neighbouring hills is so great as to deserve the supremacy which Josephus gives it, "The highest of all the mountains of Samaria." From the smooth sheet of rock on its summit, with the cave beside it, still existent, Abram would embrace a view of the Mediterranean Sea on the west—he might even see the white sails—the snowy heights of Hermon on the north, and on the east the far-off wall of mountains beyond the Jordan, while the lovely expanse of the plain lay stretched as a carpet of many colours beneath his feet.

It is worthy of remark that Gerizim, or its immediate neighbourhood, has been the seat of primitive worship from that hour to this. It has been "a holy place" to Israel, or one so called, for nearly 4000 years.

There are many reasons for supposing that three or four wondrous scenes in Abram's life took place on this mountain. There is no notice in Genesis of the "appearance" of God to man before His appearance to Abram. We have heard already of "the presence of the Lord," "the voice of the Lord," and of many Divine acts and deeds, but not of an "appearance of the Lord," before the appearance at Sichem. The altar and the sacrifice, as we have seen, belonged, in those days, to the "presence," and now it belongs to the "appearance" of God, whether in the assumed form of man or angel. We observe that Abram builds an altar wherever he goes, for the Presence of God goes with him; but we no longer hear of it as as marked by the attendance of cherubim, for Jehovah reveals Himself in a less awful form.

Digitized by Google

There is something very surprising and mysterious in the first meeting of Melchisedek with the favored patriarch, and in the after references to him in the vi. & vii. ch. Hebrews. A "priest of the most high God," and yet apparently a dweller in Canaan, he crosses, for a moment, Abram's path, and is recognised, without question, as a person of higher spiritual rank than him whom he comes forth to bless. He bears titles which the children of Abram in after ages would associate only with their own Messiah—"King of righteousness and Prince of peace" (these St. Paul points out to us); and he brings forth bread and wine, which recall to the mind of Christians the elements now used in the Lord's Supper.

We hear no more of Melchisedek in the Scriptures till after 800 years. David speaks of him in a Psalm (cx. 4) as a prophetic type of his coming Lord—and 1200 years after that, the Hebrew Christians are taught to look to Melchisedek (Heb. vi. vii.) as a proof that it was the consistent purpose of God to abolish the Levitical priesthood.

It cannot be certainly settled who Melchisedek was; for the Apostle does not inform us. The Jewish traditions pronounce that he was the patriarch Shem, who survived the Deluge 500 years; and this meeting might have happened seventy years before his death. He was the natural lord of Canaan, in which Ham's children were only intruders, and was best entitled, by the dignity of age, to convey his right to Abram.

Shem lived on, beyond the marriage of Isaac, and to within twenty-seven years of Abram's death. He must have seen Arphaxad, Salah, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, and Terah, with their generations, die out; and must have seemed to them indeed to have neither "beginning of days" (in their dispensation)

Digitized by Google

"nor end of life." At the same time, the words in Hebrews vii. 3, "without father, without mother, without pedigree," cannot apply to Shem; therefore the question must be left undecided.

There are good authorities for the modern opinion that the meeting with the "King of Salem" (Gen. xiv. 18) occurred on Gerizim, and that to Melchisedek, as the royal guardian and master of the most ancient and conspicuous sanctuary of Palestine, Abraham paid the tenth of his lately acquired spoils. There is a village called Salem, very near to Gerizim, expressly mentioned in the history of Jacob (Gen. xxxiii. 18), and which re-appears in the New Testament, in the history of the Baptist. (John iii. 23.)

The great Jeru-salem only became a place of importance in Jewish history in the time of David; and there is no hint in Scripture that marks any sacredness attached to that place (which in early times was called Jebus) until the vision of David. (1 Chron. xxi. 16.)

Shechem, on the other hand, was for 400 years selected as the metropolis of the country; and Moses definitely directs that on Gerizim and Ebal, the law shall be read to the people (Deut. xi. 29, 30); which brings us to the *third* scene in Abram's life, most probably occurring on Mount Gerizim; because it was said to him of his seed, "In the fourth generation they shall come hither again;" and hither by the order of Moses they came.

It seems to be immediately after the slaughter of the kings, and Abram's noble refusal to be enriched by the transaction, that God in vision says to him,—

"Fear not Abram, I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward." Gen. iv.

On this occasion special sacrifice is enjoined and

Digitized by Google

defined by God; the slain and dedicated victims representing the offerer. A prophetic horror of the bondage passes before Abram in his slumber; but the sacrifice is consumed and accepted; and in the same day the COVENANT of the land is made with Abram, which in its fulness, is not yet fulfilled—that from the Nile to the Euphrates, unto his seed shall be given the land of Palestine both east and west.

There is a reason given for its suspension in Jeremiah xxxiv. 18, 19, 20:—

"I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

"And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof,

"The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf;

"I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth."

And meanwhile the Holy Ghost tells us by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians:—

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

"And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God *in Christ*, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

"For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."

To this incident of the past therefore our Lord

Digitized by Google

alludes, when He says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, he saw it and was glad."

It must have been the spiritual sight of the Jehovah of the Old Testament, who is the Christ of the New, that was given to Abram with the covenant on Gerizim, which must have rendered possible to his faith, the after sacrifice of Isaac.

Between the vision and the "coming again of the people to Gerizim, intervened, as we know, the birth of Ishmael and of Isaac, and the offering up of Isaac himself for sacrifice, probably about forty years after the time of the vision. It is on the tradition and authority of Josephus, rather than on any statement of the Scriptures, that the scene of Isaac's offering has been transferred, in popular belief, to Mount Moriah, one of the hills of Jerusalem. Yet when the destroying angel stayed his hand at the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite (2 Sam. xxiv. 16) there is no allusion made to any previous act of the Lord's mercy shown in that locality; and neither at the building or at the dedication of Solomon's Temple on the same spot, when the glory of the Lord filled the house, are we ever reminded that He had already sanctified it by any previous appearance to Abraham or salvation to Isaac; the narrative merely goes back to the lesser event of staying the plague at the threshing-floor of Araunah.

The reference in Amos vii. 9, confirms the idea that these hills of Samaria were the "*high places of Isaac*," which were to become "desolate;" the sanctuary of Israel which was to be "laid waste;" the house of Jeroboam which was to be "given to the sword."

"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," said the woman of Samaria to our Saviour, when He came to Sychar, in the days of His flesh; and although

Digitized by Google

He answered her in an era when the prophecy of Amos had been long fulfilled,—"Ye worship ye know not what, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father,"—the reply recognized the *two* high places of the chosen people, of which Gerizim stood *first* in venerated antiquity and in order of time. "When Isaac was to be offered, Abraham was in the land of the Philistines. From Beersheba, or Gaza, the southern point of Palestine, he would move along the plain, and on the morning of the third day would arrive in Sharon, where the massive height of Gerizim is visible 'afar off;' see Gen. xxii.; and from thence half a day would bring him to its summit, whereas Mount Moriah, at Jerusalem, is not visible till the traveller is close upon it."

There were other after scenes at Shechem.

The locality thus sacred in the lives of Abraham and Isaac, was not less so to Jacob. He, too, pitched his tent, and built his altar in Shechem, and when he left it in sorrow for the violence of his sons, and put away from his household their strange gods, and went up to Bethel, he hid their idols and their ear-rings under "the Oak of Shechem."

It was at Shechem the cruel brethren sold their father's favourite, Joseph, to the Ishmaelites going down to Egypt with balm and spicery (the first caravan we hear of in Scripture), and so led their own way into the land of bondage. It was to Shechem and Gerizim that they came again in the fourth generation, according to the vision of their great forefather, bringing Joseph's bones, which they had carried with them, by his desire, through all their forty years of desert wandering (Gen. l. 25); and they buried them in Shechem, in the in-

Digitized by Google

heritance of the children of Joseph (Josh. xxiv. 32). "At the mouth of the Valley of Shechem two slight breaks are visible, in the midst of the vast plain of corn—one a white Mussulman chapel, the other a few fragments of stone; the first covers the alleged tomb of Joseph, Ishmael's mark of present triumph over Isaac's exiled race; the other, THE WELL, choked up by ruins, but still the well of 'our father Jacob.'"

But we have limited ourselves to the history of Abraham in this period, and must return with him to BETHEL, where he pitched his tent after his first visit to Sichem; and whence, pressed by famine, he departed for Egypt; where there dwelt already a Pharaoh and his princes, known apparently to Abram as despotic lords, and likely to kill him, that they might seize on his beautiful wife.

His faith in God is not here in exercise, and he thinks to save himself by entreating her to say she is his sister, telling only a part of the truth. This was sadly short-sighted, as all cowardly shifts and evasions are, and proves, alas! that his life seemed dearer to him than his wife; but the Lord observes the strait he is in, and interferes to restore Sarah to him unharmed.

Lot had gone with him into Egypt, and they both return as rich men "of great substance, so that they could not dwell together." Abram pays a second visit to Bethel, to the place of his second altar, and calls on the name of the Lord.

He then most unselfishly offers Lot, who had no claim to it, his choice of hill and plain—to the right or left—resolving to be content with whatever remained. The choice of Lot was not unselfish, and he passed over in his judgment the exceeding wickedness of the cities of the plain. He saw

Digitized by Google

in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. viii. 11); and in Isa. xxix. 22, "Thus saith the Lord who *redeemed* Abraham." Remembered through all time as "faithful Abraham," he is held up for ever to all living as "*the friend of God*," "who against hope believed in hope." A contrast to the children of doubt, and alas! to our first parents, who listened to Satan's first temptation—"Hath God said?"

How beautiful is the character sketched in these thirteen chapters! Yet we cannot say how faultless! for, like Job's patience, even Abraham's faith could sometimes fail; but his sins are covered. With Sarah, he "died in faith, not having received the promises; but having seen them afar off, they were persuaded of them and embraced them."

The promise was very early fulfilled that he should be a father of *many* nations (Gen. xvii. 5). His *unchosen* sons, Ishmael, and those borne to him in the last thirty years of his life by his second wife Keturah, multiplied much more rapidly than the posterity of Isaac; and their descendants and Lot's still hold the land of Eastern Palestine. He sent them away from Isaac while he yet lived, "eastward unto the east country," which means the desert east of the land of Bashan and Gilead, extending to the river Euphrates.

For the conquest of the Hagarites by the Reubenites, see 1 Chron. v., in which it is said that "the war was of God." Abraham's descendants are—

I. The Israelites, through Isaac and Jacob.
II. The Arabs—through Ishmael.
III. "The Children of the East"—of whom the Midianites and the Hagarites were chief.

It is very striking that Abraham's own first, and only actual possession in the Land of Promise, was a Tomb. The Cave of Machpelah lies now beneath the Mosque of Hebron.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



THE CASTLE OF SALKHAD.

Digitized by Google

THE TIMES BEFORE THE PENTATEUCH WAS WRITTEN.

ARABIA AND THE PATRIARCH JOB.

No. IV.

"The mingled people that dwell in the desert."

It cannot be certainly proved whether the times of the patriarch Job were before or after Abraham, but we may surely conclude that he lived within the limit defined by St. Paul in Romans v. as "from Adam to Moses," and that his country was either Syria or Northern Arabia.

The Arabians are called in Scripture "the mingled people that dwell in the desert" (Jer. xxv. 24). Our readers should now refer to the map of Arabia, given p. 14, to form some idea of that great country, almost a continent in itself, whose western length along the Red Sea is 1400 miles; along the Indian Ocean to the south it is 1200 miles; while the great isthmus joining it to Asia, from Syria to Chaldea, is 900 miles across.

Arabia belongs to Asia, but it has often been called "Africa in little." It has a small repetition of its mighty self at its north-west corner, which is called Arabia Petrea, or the *stony* Arabia; and in that portion of it the children of Israel wandered forty years before their entrance to their promised land of Palestine on the north.

Digitized by Google

If you now look again at the enlarged map of the northern portion of Arabia given in p. 44, you will find the second division of Arabia—called *Deserta*—on the south of Eastern Palestine. The tract of Chaldea does not really come within that map at all, but is inserted to shew the relative direction from which Abram came. Arabia Deserta is a high plain, stretching far and wide, under a burning cloudless sky, where no showers temper the heat, and where none could live but for the cool winds and dews of night. You will find such a country described in the short 35th chapter of Isaiah, as "the wilderness and the solitary place," the "parched ground" where pools and streams and springs would truly call forth songs of praise; and these are promised, "when the ransomed of the Lord return and come to Zion," with everlasting joy upon their heads, and when their "sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

But those days are not yet arrived. By day the winds still raise intolerable clouds of fine dust. There is not a single navigable river in all Arabia, and very few streams as yet find their way to the sea. The country is watered, if at all, by *wadis*—*i.e.*, channels of land depressed a few feet below the surrounding level, down which, in the rainy season, run rills or brooks, which are so picturesquely used by Job as an image of the pity he expected from his friends (Job. vi. 15—18) and *found not.*

"My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away. . . . What time they wax warm they vanish: when it is hot they are consumed out of their place. . . . They go to nothing and perish."

From Arabia *the Stony*, however, and Arabia *the Desert*, you can pass southwards to the great tract of Arabia Felix, or *the Happy*, where arid deserts alter-

Digitized by Google

nate with grander green oases, or wide spots of verdure and fertility, far wider than we had been used to conceive before the modern traveller, Mr. Palgrave, had in 1862 penetrated to Arabia's inner heart.

His way through the desert he describes as "level, monotonous, desolate," absolutely dry, where you chew dry dates and cinder-cake as you plod along through the wilds which defy all attempts of man to reclaim or change them, threading the great desert ring which encircles central Arabia and renders communication so difficult between it and the outside lands of Syria and Persia.

The inner portion of Arabia is a vast and mountainous table land, called by the name of the Upper and the Lower Nejd. Long has that name been written on the maps, while nothing more was known of this centre of ancient civilization. The outer edge of the sandy ring is girt by a line of mountains, low and sterile in general, but on the south, in Yemen and Oman, expanding into high, and broad, and fertile regions, beyond which lies a narrow rim of coast land, bordered by the sea.

The Arabs call their deserts "Nafood"—"the swellings of Nafood;" and when the traveller is among those enormous ridges of red, loose sand, each ridge two or three hundred feet in height, all furrowed by the capricious gales in the depths between, he feels as if hemmed in by burning walls; when each slope is ascended, he overlooks what seems a vast sea of fire, ruffled into little red-hot waves; the sun strikes blazing down, till clothes, baggage, housings, all take the smell of burning, and scarce permit the touch.

Such is the land of the "mingled people." None could live in it, but for its oases. At the edge of

Digitized by Google

such a sand ocean, two or three sparrows will begin to twitter under a low shrub by the wayside, and the spent traveller will weep for very joy; perhaps twenty-four hours afterwards he will come across a pretty village, and be able to quench his thirst with fresh grapes.



THE ARAB SHEIKH.

If we wish to understand the first peopling of Arabia, we must go back to the table of long-lived men after the Flood, that we may find the patriarch Eber. He is mentioned in the Bible (Gen. x. 24, 25): "And Salah begat Eber. And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother's name was Joktan." It seems as if Eber had been scarcely enough noticed in patriarchal story. His is the longest life after the Flood (464 years), except Shem's (which was 500 years); he survives Shem, who was his great-grandfather, for thirty-one years, and he was the ancestor of the first stock of the Arab nations.

It is impossible to study the Bible without

Digitized by Google

observing the importance attached to the number *seven* in the history of Israel. Now Eber stands out in the new world as *seventh* from Enoch, who, we are told, was "*seventh* from Adam," and sees Isaac born, "the child of promise," who was *seventh* from himself.

In the days of Eber's son Peleg, came "division;" in the days of Abraham, "choice." *Eber sees both.* He sees the birth of the three ancestors of the Arabs—"the mingled people,"—JOKTAN, and ISHMAEL, and ESAU, the three *un*chosen sons of three fathers—Eber, Abram, and Isaac, who had all besides a *chosen* son in Peleg, Isaac, and Jacob, in whom the lineal succession was to be continued, from which the Messiah at last would spring. Eber probably outlived his own son Joktan, and is found on the earth ninety-three years with Ishmael, and nineteen with Esau.

We here perceive the beginning of the Arabian three-fold cord which runs on beside all the long lines of earth's history. Joktan is born about 100 years after the Flood; Ishmael not till 338 years after Joktan, and Esau 74 years later than Ishmael; and the descendants of each are yet known as inhabiting Arabia. Joktan had thirteen sons (Gen. x.), many of whose names are still preserved in those of existing Arab tribes. Their settlements are mentioned in the Bible, and the last one named is a Jobab, who *may* possibly have been the patriarch Job:—

"And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazermaveth, and Jerah.

"And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah.

"And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba.

"And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan.

"Their dwelling was from Mesha as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the East." (Gen. x. 26—30.)

Digitized by Google

The situation of Mesha has never been made out, but Sephar is believed to be Zafari, the sea port of the country of Yemen, on the south-west of Arabia. Yemen extends two or three hundred miles along the shore of the Indian Ocean, and is the country of spice and frankincense. The sons of Joktan may have reached it by going down the Red Sea, and then pressing towards the east.

There are still, at this distance of time, relics of their names in the south of Arabia. Hadramaut, for Hazar-Maveth; Azal, for Uzal; Seba, for Sheba; and the *genuine* Arabs, as they are called, all trace their descent to Joktan, whom they call Kahtan. The Arabian writers speak of the children of Ishmael as the "*adopted*" Arabs; but these it will be seen could only have colonized Arabia 400 years or more *after* the *genuine* Joktanites. Mesha may possibly mean Es-Sham, the ancient name for Damascus, and from Mesha to Sephar in Arabia, may have been a similar expression to that of "from Dan to Beersheba" in Palestine, meaning from north to south; for this was doubtless at first the range of the dwellings of the Joktanites; and as no trace of Jobab, the youngest son, has been discovered among the Arab names of places or tribes in *South* Arabia, this youngest son may have dwelt in the *northern* region of Aram Naharaim, the high land between the rivers near Damascus. The patriarch Job dwelt in the land of Uz; and Dr. Beke says that that district was called the land of Ghuth, or Uz.

It was to the land of Midian that Moses fled from Pharaoh, and there he dwelt with Jethro, although he led his father-in-law's flocks to the backside of the desert to Horeb. In Midian, from its neighbourhood to the land of Ghuth, or Uz, Moses may have heard of Job's history recorded by himself, and added

Digitized by Google

to it by inspiration, its introduction and its close. Moses was born 777 years after the Flood, and died at the age of 120—897 years after it. The era of Job may possibly have been 200 years before Abraham. His knowledge of God seems to place him of necessity very near to the age of the early patriarchs. Eliphaz mentions as alive at that era, *men much older* than Job's father; and the inspired Elihu is said to be of the kindred of Ram, or Aram.

The first person named "Uz" in the Bible is the son of Aram, and grandson of Shem; the second is the son of Nahor by Milcah, Isaac's cousin (Gen. xxii. 21); the third is a grandson of Seir the Horite. (Gen. xxxvi. 28.)

The Horites seem to have early inhabited Mount Seir, a hilly range which lies south of the Dead Sea, and these were probably children of Ham, and allied to the Emims and Rephaim, with whom they are named, as conquered in Abraham's day by the Chaldean kings (Gen. xiv. 6); they were vanquished again a second time by the children of Esau (Deut. ii. 12—22); so that it might be said alike of Edom and of Canaan:—

"For they of Ham had dwelt there of old." (1 Chron. iv. 40.)

The name Horite is derived from cave, or hole, and means a cave-dweller. The Horites, as well as the Zuzims, may have been giants "great and tall, like the Anakims" (Deut. ii. 21). To them are attributed the excavation of the vast rock-dwellings which are still found in hundreds among the mountains of Edom and rocks of Petra. Now, this *third* land of Uz must have been that to which Jeremiah refers when he says, "Rejoice, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz;" but for the first land of Uz we must seek, as we have said, north-

Digitized by Google

ward to Syria and Padan Aram in the days *before* Abraham.

We wish to give you the opportunity in reading the wonderful old Book of Job to compare for yourselves the reasons for believing Job to have lived *before* Abraham, *or just after* him; for the advocates of each opinion have much to say on either side; and in examining their various claims we shall be led into the heart and meaning of the book itself.

Let us take *first*, the reasons for believing that Job lived *before* Abraham, and in the time of the early Joktanites; his enemies were the Sabeans and the Chaldeans, those nations being first spoken of after the Flood. The Sabeans, named from Saba, in South Arabia, and the Chaldeans from the plain of Shinar; likewise a people with the habits of the Horites, whom Job says (chap. xxx.) he would have disdained to have set with the dogs of his flock.

"Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat.

"They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;)

"To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.

"Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

"They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth."

But Job is also visited by his chosen friends, *wise* persons from Teman, from Shuah, from Naamah—all districts that border alike on Syria and Arabia.

Elihu is the son of a Buzite. There may have been a Buz as well as an Uz in near relation to Aram, Shem's grandson, before the Uz and Buz who were sons of Nahor, in the Arphaxad line.

Job mentions the gold of Ophir and the topaz of

Digitized by Google

Ethiopia, and he is thought to allude to the Pyramids of Egypt when he speaks of the "kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves." (Chap. iii. 14.)

And now let us mark the events and peoples of which Job does *not* speak. There is no mention in this ancient book of God's dealings with Abraham or his children, neither of the patriarch's call, nor of the Exodus of Israel from Egypt, nor of any of the miracles that marked their going forth, which must have been heard of far and wide. Neither is there any allusion to the previous destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which must have terrified all the dwellers east and west of the Jordan; although each history would so greatly have magnified the mighty power of God, and the converse of Job and his friends seems to be such a summing up of all that was known of Jehovah.

By the testimony of God Himself, there was not n all the earth such a perfect and upright man as Job; and very much more of his wisdom and knowledge is placed on record than of any other of the patriarchs. He seems to have been famous both in heaven and earth. We have in Genesis the narrative of noble facts and deeds, and short and vivid sketches of character; yet where shall we find such an introduction as in Job to the majestic current of thoughts and memories handed down through the families of Shem?

How these spiritual giants of earth's first 2,500 years towered above their fellows, when God kept them, by His grace, from worship of the heavenly bodies, forgetting the Creator in the works of His hands!

"If I beheld the sun when it shined (says Job), or the moon walking in brightness;

Digitized by Google

"And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand; I should have denied the God that is above." (Job. xxxi. 26—28.)

There is no other species of idolatry mentioned in the Book of Job than the first and most ancient, the worship of the sun and moon.

Job makes no reference to the fleshly mind of Egypt, which took the bull appointed for sacrifice, and lifted it into an idol, by the same species of delusion with which a modern school of error looks for salvation in the sacraments, and mistakes the sign for the thing signified. Neither does he refer to the first idolatries of Chaldea, to the symbol of the Presence and the Cherubic beasts. "The religious practices of Arabia," says Mr. Palgrave, "have always been remarkable for the absence of visible symbols and sculptured imagery; but their devotion was still misdirected; for the fourth king of Yemen was called Abd esh Shems, 'the servant of the sun,' and immemorial honours have been paid by the Arabs to Zahra, the morning star."

This writer also mentions that in Oman the people to this day still mutter their prayers with prostrations quite different to those of the Mahomedans, turning to the north star, which they worship by the same mysterious title, YAH, that is assumed by the Almighty to Himself in the Book of Exodus. He attributes their worship of this star to the idea of its always remaining fixed in the same place. This is a curious new light which the last five years of our century bring us in illustration of the Book of Job.

Job speaks of judgment as administered in the gate of cities; and that he was himself a patriarchal king, may be argued from his twenty-ninth chapter.

"When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street!

Digitized by Google

"The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose and stood up.

"The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth.

"The nobles held their peace."

He adds—

"I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem." (Job. xxix. 14.)

To the all-seeing eye it was known how true it was that he had been a man of peace, a judge, and father to the poor, eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, bountiful and hospitable, "the greatest of all the men of the east." Before any part of our Bible was written, he had "esteemed the words of God more than his necessary food." He was diligent in all appointed sacrifices for sin; a man of prayer; a priest in his own household—which, it is said, marks his early era—and, in common with Enoch, he had enjoyed the patriarchal prevision of a Redeemer "to stand in the latter day upon the earth."

The manner in which his wealth is estimated, viz., by *cattle*, and the probable length of his life, is thought to prove the early age in which he lived; for as everything he had before is *doubled* when the Lord turned his captivity, it is supposed his *age* was *doubled also*, and that the years added being 140, those previous to his affliction had been 70, making his total age 210, whereas Abraham is said to have been an old man at 100.

Another great evidence of the remote antiquity of the book is that the friends, being Arabians of various districts, yet apparently continued to speak some common language, while there was evident need of an interpreter in Egypt at the time that Joseph's brethren came down there; but then Egypt was peopled from a *Hamite* stock, as were also early Chaldea and Canaan.

Digitized by Google

Having now placed before you the reasons for supposing that Job lived *before* Abraham, we must return to the subject of the peopling of Arabia; and having recognised the modern descendants of the Joktanites in the south, we must observe the rise of the race of ISHMAEL, whose history we have found interwoven in the twelve chapters that relate to his father Abraham.

You can follow out Ishmael's story in the 25*th* chapter of Genesis, after he had assisted Isaac to bury Abraham in the cave of Macphelah. In the 12th verse of that chapter begins the calendar of Ishmael's own sons, "twelve princes according to their nations." In the first generation after their father they are spoken of as possessing towns and castles; therefore they must have found their way to the green oases of the burning land. And, as it is recorded that Ishmael dwelt in the presence of all his brethren, so it is particularly mentioned that he died in their presence (Gen. xxv. 18) at the age of 137 years, half a century after his father.

The wilderness of Shur is in Stony Arabia, where the Israelites wandered; and Havilah is mentioned in connection with Eden. The Ishmaelites dwelt from Havilah to Shur. They settled all over the Peninsula, and chiefly in its central oases; where their race is still to be found distinct from the Joktanites. It was in the lower Nejd that Mr. Palgrave declares he saw the beginning of the mixture of the Ishmael and Kahtan races, which yet in general dwell apart, and are very different.

The Ishmaelites are otherwise named Hagarenes. Hagar, when cast forth by Abraham, dwelt with her son in the wilderness of Paran, north of Arabia. The promise of temporal prosperity to *his* seed (Gen. xvii. 20) was faithfully fulfilled. *His* fruit-

Digitized by Google

ful twelve tribes extended along the frontier of Arabia, from the northern extremity of the Red Sea towards the mouth of the Euphrates.

They had towers and towns, but many of them also followed a wandering life in moveable camps, as they do to this day; they also conveyed merchandize, and became wealthy and powerful. We hear of them in Joseph's time, about seventy years after their father's death, as on the way from Gilead to Egypt with camels, bearing spicery and balm, and myrrh (Gen. xxxvii. 25). They are also here called Midianites, and so associated with those who sprung from Abraham's son Midian, by his second wife Keturah.

You can look at Gilead and Midian on the map of Eastern Palestine (p. 44), and then turn to our picture of the castle of Salcah, or Salkadh, with its very old history, situate on the southern border of the land of Bashan.

Mr. Cyril Graham, a recent traveller, made various journeys from this castle occupying so commanding a position on the very edge of the desert, whence any foe could be seen almost a day's journey off. From its height he beheld the black towns and cities, the "giant cities of Bashan," all now unpeopled save by the birds of the air, the wolf, the hyæna, and the jackal. A stone door of one of these cities is found in the British Museum; but of this we shall have more to say when the children of Israel conquer the land after their wilderness journey.

We have brought you to Salcah to look forth on the wide plains of Ishmael's habitation beyond it. Moses says to Israel, when he is giving them the sum total of their conquests (Deut. iii. 8)—

"We took at that time from the kings of the Amorites the

Digitized by Google

land on this side Jordan from the river of Arnon unto Mount Hermon, and all Gilead, and all Bashan unto Salcah, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan;"

and we are again told in Joshua xii. 5, that

"Og reigned in Hermon and in Salcah, and in all Bashan."

From "Hermon to Salcah" is also as from Dan to Beersheba.

The fifth chapter of the 1st Book of Chronicles (9, 10 to 26) shows that Salcah must have stood on the eastern border of the children of Gad, whence Reuben was enabled to extend *his* border still eastward to "the entering in of the wilderness from the river Euphrates, because their cattle were multiplied in the land of Gilead. And in the days of Saul, they (the Reubenites) made war with the Hagarites, who fell by their hand; and they dwelt in their tents, upon all the face of the land east *of* Gilead."

The Hagarites were delivered into the hand of the Reubenites, and "there fell down many slain, because the war was of God;—and they took of their camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of men an hundred thousand." And they dwelt in their steads until the captivity, *i.e.*, for 300 years, till "God stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, to carry captive the Reubenites themselves into the land from which Abram came out.

Of the sons of Ishmael, Nebaioth, the first-born, was the father of the Nabatheans, who long afterwards governed northern Arabia. The second son, Kedar, was so famous among his Arab descendants that the name came to be applied to Bedouins in general. The Moabites and Ammonites who shared the land with the Ishmaelites, were, as we know, the children of Lot's daughters.

Digitized by Google

And now, to connect ESAU's history with the rest of "the mingled people," we must, for the present, pass over that of Isaac and Jacob, and read only what relates to Rebekah's favourite and elder twin son in the 25th, 26th, 27th, and 28th chapters of Genesis, till we come to his marriage with Ishmael's daughter, Bashemath, the sister of Nebaioth (Gen. xxviii. 8, 9), and find him settled in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, south of the Dead Sea (Gen. xxxii. 3); to which he returns after his friendly meeting with his long-exiled brother, Jacob, with whom he afterwards unites, as Ishmael had done with Isaac, in burying their father.

"Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days (an hundred and four-score years): and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him." (Gen. xxxv. 28, 29.)

And then chapter xxxvi. is given up wholly to the generations of Esau, "who is Edom," and his three wives—the Hittite, the Hivite, and the Ishmaelite; *the last* was his cousin Bashemath, and their son Reuel had again a son Zerah. Zerah is reckoned among the dukes of Edom, and kings succeeded dukes.

"And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.

"And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom; and the name of his city was Dinhabah.

"And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead.

"And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his stead."

Now those who do *not* believe that JOB lived *before* Abram, consider that Moses *here* gives his ancestry, and declare that the Job of our Bible is most probably the great grandson of Esau, who stands sixth in descent from Abraham through

Digitized by Google

Ishmael, while Moses himself on his mother's side was also the sixth, though on his father's the seventh descendant, from the same great ancestor through Isaac.

"Oh, that Ishmael may live before Thee!" said his father Abraham; and in answer to this prayer the sons of Ishmael seem to have had their own possession and their own "blessing" in the land of the sons of Joktan. It is said of Ishmael himself, that he was "gathered to his people," whence some have hoped that he passed away in the patriarchal faith to the patriarchal blessing; but, at least, if the somewhat *later* view of Job's era be the true one, it appears that to a royal descendant of Ishmael and Esau, the blessing of the children of Shem was not denied. "Bless me, even me also, oh my father." "Hast thou not reserved a blessing for *me?* Hast thou but one blessing?" said poor Esau, in his bitterness. And did not the "reserved blessing" fall on Job? How far nobler are the annals of this second king of Edom (even with all his faults recorded), as regards the civilization they intimate, than any of the hard-won relics from Chaldea's clay inscriptions, or indeed from Egypt's idols of granite and marble.

Throughout the Septuagint version of the Scriptures, Job and his three friends are styled kings. This version makes the full age of Job 240 years, and if we accept its authority, we may take his biography as filling up the space between Joseph and Moses, during which era there is no personal narrative beside, of any of God's servants on the earth.

The civilization described in the Book of Job is very wonderful. A city and streets are alluded to in the land of Uz, as well as tents and tabernacles;

Digitized by Google

wines and dainty meats at feasts; the couch and looking-glasses of polished metal, tell of care for furniture; the harp, the organ, the tabret, and the timbrel accompanied the dance; gold ear-rings, the robe and diadem, precious stones and jewels, are all named; the mining and refining of metals was understood, and the use of money. There was writing, engraving, and weaving; fishing and riding, and shooting with steel bows; Job had 500 yoke of oxen, and the Chaldeans carry off his 3000 camels, a valuable booty, as these animals were always highly prized for the conveyance of commerce.

After all, this civilization in the land of Edom is only equal with that of ancient Egypt and of early Chaldea at the same era, and we must remember that these were the neighbouring countries. A king of Edom would not be unacquainted with the luxuries and possessions of surrounding nations. The grand references to the animal creation in the final address of Jehovah to his servant assure us that Job must have been familiar with the war-horses of the Assyrians, which, as we may now observe from their sculptures, were of noble blood (perhaps Arabian), and are drawn from the finest models.

> "From afar he snuffeth the battle,
> The thunder of the captains and the shouting."
> (Job xxxix. 25.)

We hope, dear friends, you may now take a fresh delight in the Book of Job, the true "Book of the Chronicles" of this early time, which gathers together all the knowledge of God inherited by the men of the Arabian desert. What light does that book throw on the records of Genesis?

There is such a wonderful dramatic character about it; it is so truly a "living oracle," that many of its students have been disposed to look upon it

Digitized by Google

in the light of a beautiful romance; but this is to ignore Divine witness to the fact of Job's individuality in the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, and also apostolic reference:—

"Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it [the land], they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. xiv. 14).

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord." (James v. 11).

To Moses is commonly accorded the renown of being either the writer or compiler of the thrilling history. It may have been a problem in his mind, worked out during his meditations in the desert, how to reconcile the apparently unmerited sufferings of his own people with the love and justice of Jehovah. The beginning of God's inspiration to his human soul may have been the lifting of the curtain from heaven's side of the history of Job. In all the Bible, till we come to the Book of Revelation, there is scarce such another window into the invisible world.

Down below all is darkness. Up above, Moses sees the Lord of love and pity only proving His child in the fire, delighting in his patience, and causing him to hold fast his integrity, and confuting by this means the Accuser of the brethren.

Down below lies poor Job, casting back in his memory for what shall have brought his woes upon him, driven by the harshness of those who came at first to comfort him, to show himself righteous in his own eyes. Up above is the Lord listening, remembering the submission of his dear child, when the first strokes of the rod fell upon him.

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job i. 21).

The Refiner is watching the furnace, though He heats it seven-fold, and He is waiting for the tried

Digitized by Google

silver,—He is going to find the ransom (xxxiii. 24) and deliver from the pit. He has inspired the lips of Elihu, and to his mighty words Job finds no reply. The Lord confirms them with the whirlwind, and gives Job such a vision of Himself in light and power as vanquishes at once the least disposition to appeal against any of His ways; and the last finish of complete submission is now evident in His servant, for he says:—

"I have uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, . . . but now mine eye seeth Thee."

"Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job xlii. 3, 6).

Then the Lord also accepted Job, and appointed him an intercessor for his friends.

About 2,520 years from the call of Abraham, and 600 years after Christ, there arose in this land of Arabia a false prophet, called Mohammed, who wrote a false book, named the Koran, which the Arabs consider inspired, and he caused it to be received at the point of the sword, alike by the sons of Ishmael from whom he was descended, and by the sons of Kahtan, or Joktan. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and CHRIST, are all held up therein as rising in authority and station—in their due gradation one above another—but "Mohammed is the last and most illustrious apostle of all, and with him the divine missions cease." The writer left out the heart and soul of all the Old Testament Scriptures—THE COMING SAVIOUR—and set up *himself* in its stead.

The Koran was Satan's finished lie for the Eastern world, his imitation of the Revelation of God; and, fabulous as much of it is, *it has sufficed to keep back Christ* from all the Arabic speaking nations for the latter half of the times of the Gentiles, even for 1,260 years.

Digitized by Google

"Ye are an intermediate nation, O Arabians," said their lawgiver to them; "witnesses against the rest of mankind! Wherever ye be turn your faces towards the holy temple of Mecca."



THE MOHAMMEDAN HOUR OF PRAYER.

Still, therefore, on the sands his followers spread their prayer-carpet—truly witnesses against any of the disciples of a better Master who neglect to commune with Him, the Ever Present.

The "mingled people" have since spread so widely over the earth that when Henry Martyn, the good missionary, spoke of undertaking a version of the New Testament in Arabic, he said, "We shall then begin to preach in Arabia, Syria, Persia, Tartary, part of India and China, half of Africa, and to all the sea coasts of the Mediterranean, and Turkey—and *one tongue shall suffice for them all.*"

Thus is fulfilled the prophecy about Ishmael:—"He shall be a great nation, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



THE RUINS OF KARNAK.



A SPHINX.

Digitized by Google

THE TIMES BEFORE THE PENTATEUCH WAS WRITTEN.

ABRAHAM, JACOB, AND JOSEPH, IN EGYPT.

No. V.

BEFORE we can realise what was meant in Scripture by "going down into Egypt," we must try to picture that ancient country. We led you first to Chaldea and Assyria, because Nimrod's kingdom (the first kingdom of which we hear) begins there (Gen. x. 10). But Nimrod was only a grandson of Ham's through his elder son Cush. Ham's second son was Mizraim, who gives his name to the land of Egypt.

The ancient Egyptians called their country "CHAM," but the Hebrews called it Mizraim, which in the Hebrew of Genesis reads, "Metzrim:" "im" is the same as "yam," or "sea," and "tzr" means to enclose; Metzrim therefore signifies "encloser or embanker of the sea." We may conclude that Ham kept his second son in his own land, and gave him a portion in Lower Egypt, or the Delta, which seems to be the Metz-rim of Scripture. Herodotus, a Greek writer of the most ancient history, says that, in the reign of the first historic king of Egypt, whom he calls Menes, the whole of Egypt, except the province of Thebes, was an extended marsh. Another old writer says, "Egypt was not a country, but an universal sea." This arose from the unrestrained overflowing of the Nile; and before Egypt could have been habitable, and have become as it did the most fertile of all

Digitized by Google

lands, where the harvest scarcely ever failed, it *must* have had an embanker of the sea. At this day all Egypt is called Misr, which just means "the land of the embanker." The Pharaoh of Egypt afterwards declares: Ezek. xxix. 3.

"My river is my own, and I have made it for myself."

It is said of Menes, that having diverted the course of the river, he obliged it to run in the centre of the valley, between two parallel ridges of mountains, and that he built the city of Memphis in the bed of the ancient channel; he built a dyke above the site of the city, whose lofty mounds and strong embankments effectually confined the river Nile to its new bed. This dyke was kept always in repair by succeeding kings. We must remember this Menes or Metz-rim, Noah's grandson, "*the* embanker of the sea."

Much time has been lost by the learned in fancying Egypt to have an older history than our Hebrew Time-table of the Bible allows; but they have been obliged to come back to the fact that nothing *undoubted* on the monuments left to us either of Egypt, Babylon, or China, is now found after all to contradict the Bible chronology.

The Egyptians were a people very fond of writing and sculpture. They wrote on paper made from rushes, and these documents are called papyri; and they painted upon tablets the figures of their ancestors in long gigantic rows, whom the latest Pharaoh is represented as adoring. They called their kings Pharaoh from "Phra," the sun, and worshipped them when dead.

Two such tablets have been discovered at Abydos, in Upper Egypt—the last in the year 1864; and on this we have 76 Pharaohs, beginning with Menes, and coming down to the father of Rameses. The space

Digitized by Google

allowed in the Bible for their dominion is about 857 years, and two of them may have been reigning at the same time.

There were

603 years from the Flood to the birth of Joseph.
110 ,, to the death of Joseph.
144 ,, to the Exodus of Israel in 1451, B.C.

857

During which period the Hebrews had been multiplying for 400 years, and had been afflicted and oppressed by surrounding tribes and powers, first as a family in Canaan, and then as a mighty people in Egypt; even as God had declared to Abram.

"Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years."

Therefore, as it is written in Psalm ciii. 23, 24—

"Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. And he increased his people greatly, and made them stronger than their enemies."

"And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them." (Exodus i. 7.)

Then began the time of the bondage and of the

"Taskmasters set over them to afflict them with burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them the more they grew."

The "hard and bitter bondage," when they were made "to serve with rigour," was under a king who knew not Joseph, and may not have lasted more than a hundred years.

The Egyptian nation must have had an older rise than the Hebrews by between three and four hundred years. In the Old Testament Egypt

Digitized by Google

holds a place only second in importance to that of Palestine; and it is there first introduced to us as a country into which God guided the ancestors of His people, for the training of the nation's childhood, and out of which He led them by miraculous signs and wonders.

Egypt is that north-eastern valley and plain of Africa, watered by the river Nile. The Nile is the longest river in the world, and its source has been only traced within the last 10 years to the Lakes of Nyanza, which are fed by heavy tropical rains. The Nile is seldom more than half a mile broad, and it is confined for nine months of the year within its steep mud banks; but for the other three it pours over the burning land in an irresistible overflow—more like a sea than a river, leaving its fertilising mud behind; and when it retires the vegetation that springs forth is like that of a new-born world. The inundation begins towards the close of August. If the Nile fail to rise there is famine even in Egypt, as in the days of Joseph.

The Nile is often named in Scripture as "the river of Egypt," "the river 'Sihor,'" or the black. (*Jer.* ii. 18.)

But Egypt does not consist wholly of valley and river—it has adjoining table lands of *desert*, strewn with sand. These rise above the river in shelving cliffs, which range from 300 to 6000 feet; they have no vegetation, and their dazzling light yellow colour forms a striking contrast to the bright green valley, and the dark blue river that flows between its mountain ranges.

In their sides there are many grotto-graves and mummy-pits, and erected tombs. In fact, Egypt is one great cemetery; which caused the Israelites to say to Moses, "Because there were no graves in

Digitized by Google

Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" (Exodus xiv. 11.)

As Egypt is called the land of Ham, we are sure that Ham *did* depart to it from the face of his father Noah, doubtless, with all the memories of the mighty works of the giants in the earth in former days; and the ideas of building in Egypt were so vast, that at this day we should say the records of their structures were fables, did not the immense remains exist to witness to the truth of history.

Who has not heard of the Egyptian Pyramids, those monstrous milestones on the highway of old time? They too were tombs—the tombs of Pharaohs, and are scattered, more than twenty in number, around the ruins of Memphis on the left bank of the Nile. The great Pyramid of Ghizeh, and its almost equally enormous neighbours, were built by Memphian kings.

"Memphis shall bury them,"

says Hosea (x. 4). This city is called Noph in Scripture. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, all speak of it in long after years, and their prophecies of its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar were fully accomplished.

The size of the larger pyramid is overwhelming. It is said once to have covered 12 acres of land. Its height was then 450 feet, and it contained eighty-five millions of cubic feet of stone. It stands eleven miles west of the Nile, and is in fact a mountain built of hewn stones, some of them thirty feet long. A French engineer has reckoned that the Great Pyramid would suffice to build a wall all round France, measuring 1,800 miles—a wall one foot thick and ten feet high.

The kings of the first period of Egypt's history are called Pyramid-kings; but their actual sepulchre

Digitized by Google

within the heart of the enormous mass consisted but of a few small chambers, and the royal body, if ever deposited, has since been removed in search for treasure. The name of the builder of the great pyramid of Ghizeh is inscribed upon it—*Shufu;* he is also called Cheops. The builder of the second is called Chephren; and in the third pyramid of Ghizeh hsa been found the stone coffin of the king for whom it was built, the coffin of King Mykerinus. On the floor of its sepulchral chamber was discovered a mummy-case, or rather its broken lid (for the pyramid had been rifled hundreds of years before by the Saracens), which proved to be, from the picture-writing upon it, the mummy-case and coffin of the builder.

That ancient lid, perhaps 4,000 years old, is now in the British Museum; you can go and see it there; and the far-off time to which it belongs, and the certainty of the occupant, throw an awful interest round this relic of the first Pharaohs.

These ancient and extraordinary Egyptians, whose thoughts seem always to have been occupied with their temples and their tombs, believed that the spirit, when it left the body, wandered on, never resting, giving life to some beast of the field, some fowl of the air, some fish of the sea,—waiting for the redemption of the original body; therefore they took great pains to preserve their bodies after death, in time-proof mansions. They had no Mosaic revelation to which to refer, to set them right when they were wrong; and after the death of the patriarchs, they derived their knowledge from tradition, or that which one told another.

Some recent discoveries in the Great Pyramid prove also, it is said, "that its first designer intended to make it, as well as a royal tomb, a stan-

Digitized by Google

dard of weights and measures to all mankind. Its inch, its pound, and its acre, come exceedingly close to the standard we still use. In its measures of *time*, special respect is paid to the week of seven days; and throughout the building there is such a constant protest against idolatry, that it appears to be not so much an Egyptian as a Hebrew devised structure of the inspired period, and of the age of the earliest patriarchs."

The gateway inserted below of the Egyptian temple of Dendera, is of a far later age than the pyramids, and has inscribed upon it the names of ROMAN emperors, but it is given chiefly to point

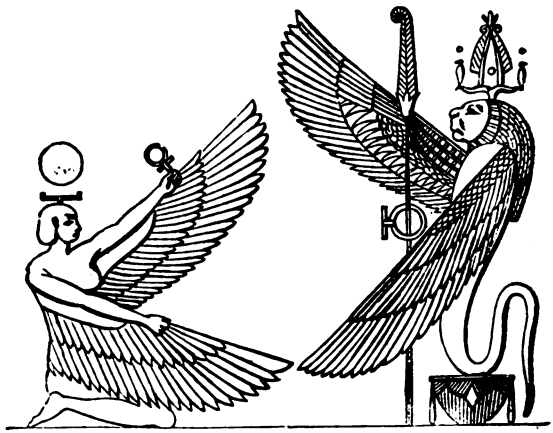


PORTICO OF THE TEMPLE OF DENDERA.

attention to the *orb and wings*, which are so well known on Egyptian sculptures of every age, and which are the symbol of the early worship of the sun, a similitude of the first brushes of dawning light in the eastern heavens.

There came from Shinar to Egypt, as well as to Assyria, the memory of the Eden cherubim. The accompanying forms may be found in the British

Digitized by Google



WINGED FIGURES RESEMBLING CHERUBIM IN EGYPT.

Museum, on the side of a sarcophagus, or vast stone coffin.

Very early, as we learn from the picture-writing, or hieroglyphics on the walls of ancient temples, true and noble notions of God, and of the past, and of the future, were mixed up with base idolatries, not only of sun, moon, stars, and men, but of brutes, reptiles, plants, and even insects. They bowed down to bulls, crocodiles, lily-flowers, onions, and beetles. Long galleries have lately been discovered hewn in the rocks near Memphis, opening every fifty yards into high arched vaults, under each of which reposes the most magnificent black marble sarcophagus, a chamber rather than a coffin, grander than those of the Theban kings; each the last resting-place of the successive corpses of the bull Apis; for the children of Ham, who once "knew God," had changed His "incorruptible glory into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Here they are! the Pharaohs, the Ibises, the Bulls, and the Beetles,

Digitized by Google

left to illustrate the first chapter of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans; and for the sins to which God gave them up, who served the creature rather than the Creator, they have yet to enter into judgment.

The idea of worshipping the *bull* doubtless came from the memory of the cherubim; as Assyria had taken the *lion* and the *eagle*, the kings of the animal and bird creation, whether desert or domestic. The mystic beetle was the symbol of light and life to the Egyptians, and is generally found on the breast of all their priestly mummies. This they probably thought another rendering of the orb and wings, or another sun in miniature.

In Egypt the royal majesty is always represented by making the king, not like Saul, "from the head and shoulders," but from the foot and ankle upwards, higher than the rest of the people.

Avenues of giant kings towered high above the streets and temples of Thebes; and three of gigantic size still remain. Such a statue of Rameses sat on the right side of the entrance to his palace. Far and wide must have been seen his enormous head, and his vast hands resting on his elephantine knees. The statues which support the portico of the temple seem pigmies before him. "Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt," says the Lord by Ezekiel (xxxi. 2), "Whom art thou like in thy greatness?" Upon these words the vast statues are a wonderful comment.

Two such statues abide on the plain of Thebes to this day—the only two out of an avenue of eighteen like them whose remains strew the ground. Thebes is nineteen days' journey up the Nile, and was Egypt's second metropolis long before Israel was settled in the land of Goshen. The statues

Digitized by Google

and their thrones (not the pedestals) are cut out of one stone; they sit where they were first erected, and the Nile waters have washed their feet for three and thirty centuries with every year's inundation. At other seasons they rise from the green



STATUES OF AMENOPHIS III.

plain, and the African sky glows red behind them. They are sixty feet high; their faces are fearfully mutilated. They are the STONES OF EGYPT—symbols of her desolation.

Thebes, or Theba, means *the ark*, and the chief temple there seems to have been built in commemoration of the Deluge;—a boat-like shrine was the most sacred object in the ancient Egyptian temples.

Thebes is a city that was thought worthy of mention in Scripture: it is there called "No-Ammon," "populous No," perhaps from No-ah.

It stood upon a vast plain describing a circuit of thirty miles, and was called "the City of the Hundred Gates," and the whole extent is *still* strewed with broken columns, avenues of sphinxes,

Digitized by Google

colossal figures, obelisks, porticoes, blocks of polished granite; and above these, in all the nakedness of desolation, tower the amazing pillars of the ancient temples. The largest and the oldest among these ruins is called "the Temple of Karnak;" and 134 of its pillars are still standing in rows, nine deep. There is no other such assembly of pillars in the world: they are covered with paintings of gods, kings, priests, and warriors: the walls and roof are still glowing with the richest colours. Many parts of this temple are older than the days of Moses—1,600 years before the birth of Christ. We have given you a hint of its glory in the frontispiece.

If we cannot go to Egypt to see these wonders of the early world, the stones of Egypt are brought to us. It is very impressive to the reader of the Bible to walk down the Gallery of Egyptian Antiquities in the British Museum, to mark the Rosetta Stone, whose inscription, in three languages, is said to give a wondrous key to the dark sayings on the monuments — and there also to find the scattered members of the colossal granite forms of Rameses or Thothmes—both the Pharaohs of Scripture—the enormous *foot*, the gigantic *fist*, the haughty and helmeted *head*. Here are the stones



THE ROSETTA STONE.

Digitized by Google

which Israel may have seen in Egypt ere they were cast down—but now, behold the "high arm of the wicked!" "it is broken," as Job said (xxxviii. 15). The giant arm and hand in red granite is a mute comment on the following words:—

"The word of the Lord came unto me saying—....I have broken the arm of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and lo, it shall not be bound up to be healed.....And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them through the countries,.....and they shall know that I am the Lord." (Ezek. xxx. 21, 23, 26.)

As Abraham went into Egypt about 430 years after the Flood, or more than 1900 B.C. (see Gen. xii. 10), he must have seen the *earliest* of its pyramids at Memphis. Despotic Pharaohs were then in existence, for he feared they would seize upon his fair Sarah, "kill him," and "save her alive;" but his fears were ungrounded; he was entreated well for her sake, and received addition to his shepherd wealth, and even Sarah was undeservedly restored unharmed through the interference of his Almighty Friend.

Meantime the Egyptian empire grows for another 400 years. The Temple of Karnak arises in Thebes —the "City of the Hundred Gates." ISAAC never goes down into Egypt; and we must return to his history in Palestine, and then see how Jacob's story blended with his son Joseph's in the land of Ham. Joseph's age was 39 when his father came down to him, and he was 56 at the death of Jacob. Of his 110 years, 88 were spent in Egypt.

JACOB AND JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

THE history of Isaac, the promised seed, begins in chapter xxi. of Genesis, as intertwined with that of his father, Abraham, and continues to the 10th verse of chapter xxviii., when it merges into

Digitized by Google

that of his son JACOB, who was born to him with Esau when he had reached the age of sixty, and while he dwelt by the well Lahai-roi, "The well of Him that liveth and seeth," where the angel first met Hagar.

Jacob's history may be found from Genesis xxvii. to xxxvii.; and is continued in connection with JOSEPH'S, from chapter xlii. to the close of the first book of the Pentateuch. Joseph's history begins in chapter xxxvii.

Esau had married Judith, a daughter of the children of Heth, when he was forty, and his father Isaac a hundred years old; and although Isaac had unwittingly transferred to Jacob the patriarchal blessing of the eldest son, he must have perceived that this transfer was by the will of God, for he confirms it to Jacob, ere he sends him away to the *Syrian* kindred of his mother Rebekah, to seek a wife of the chosen race of Shem, at Haran, near Damascus.

Jacob departs from "Beersheba, or the well of the oath," to which the family must have previously removed. It is said that Isaac reopened the wells which his father Abraham had dug, and which the Philistines had filled up again with earth. The existence of a city at Beersheba is mentioned in Gen. xxvi. 33. And many years afterwards Jacob revisited the spot for solemn worship, before starting for Egypt with his family. (Gen. xlvi. 1—5.)

Those very wells of Beersheba are still visited by travellers of our own age; they are lined with masonry, and the deep grooves cut in the curb-stones by the friction of ropes, make their edges appear to be frilled or fluted.* All around lie the

* The Arabs always bring their own ropes to these wilderness wells, which explains the saying of the woman of Samaria: "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep."

Digitized by Google

stone camel-troughs of ancient days. Seven wells have been described by different travellers, which is worthy of notice, because "Sheba" in Hebrew signifies *seven*, as well as an oath.

Two of these wells are five feet across, but a third is much wider, twelve feet and-a-half across, which is probably the well whereof the Lord spoke unto Moses in Numbers xxi. 16. "Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song,

> Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it:
> The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it,
> By direction of the lawgiver, with their staves."

Hagar saw the first well of Beersheba (Gen. xxi. 19), which revived the fainting Ishmael.

By the wells they dug Abraham and Isaac have sat with Abimelech, made sacred oaths of peace, and planted groves. The wandering Arab strikes his tent, and leaves but the ashes of his extinguished fires. The patriarchs left wells and groves.

From Beersheba Abraham journeyed with Isaac to offer him in sacrifice; and, restored to his father by the word of the Lord, here Isaac himself dwelt long and peacefully.

From this spot Jacob fled, having filched birthright and blessing from his brother Esau; *here* the Israelites entered the land they were to possess, even unto Dan. Here Samuel made his sons judges, and hence Elijah wandered out into the southern desert from the wrath of Jezebel, when God was about to feed him with that meat in whose strength he went forty days to Horeb, the Mount of God.

It was in Gerar, west of Beer-Sheba, among the Philistines, that Isaac dwelt, when the Lord said unto him, "Go not down into Egypt; sojourn in this land," and here he received *his* first

Digitized by Google

blessing (xxvi. 3), for himself and his seed, and all nations. In Gerar Isaac sowed, and received in the same year an hundredfold. Abram had been called by the children of Heth "a mighty prince," and Isaac "went forward," and was "very great" in possession of flocks, herds, and servants. The Philistines envied him, and even the friendly Abimelech said to him, as the Egyptians afterwards said to the people of Israel, "Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we." He dug more wells in Gerar, but he was obliged to name them Esek, "*contention*," and Sibnah, "*hatred*," before he obtained the blessing of Rehoboth, "*room*."

It was specially at Beersheba that the *second* blessing reached Isaac (xxvi. 24), and it is given for "Abraham's sake." Jacob, it is evident, did not go up to Padan-aram till he was seventy-seven years old, when Isaac must have been 137. Before this Isaac is spoken of as old and dim-sighted, and expecting the day of his death, which appears, however, not to have occurred for forty-three years, when Jacob and Esau bury him at the age of a hundred and fourscore in the cave of Machpelah. Jacob is away from him for twenty years with Laban, during which the much coveted blessing is confirmed to this favoured son, a *third*, *fourth*, and *fifth* time, by God Himself, at Bethel, at Peniel, and at Bethel yet again (see Gen. xxviii. 19; xxxii. 30; xxxv. 11, 15); his father Isaac had blessed him *twice*, so that there are *seven* prophetic blessings upon *Isaac and Jacob*, confirming the *seven* bestowed upon Abraham.

FOURTEEN *are the precious* TITLE DEEDS received from their fathers by the nation chosen by God as witnesses for Himself in a fallen world. No *faultless* witnesses however, for in Jacob's last words

Digitized by Google

to his twelve sons, those addressed to Reuben, to Simeon, and to Levi, almost disguise the father's blessing under his emphatic blame. The Bible is so really fitted to be the guide of our daily life, because it is so truthful and impartial in its narratives. Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, and even Benjamin, the prophetic spirit does not so much *bless* as it tells them "that which shall befal them in the last days;" but for Judah and to Joseph (or Ephraim), the blessing brims over. They are the two *heads* of the tribes.

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

"Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.

"His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk."

And Joseph,

"Is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:

"The archers have sorely grieved him and shot at him, and hated him;

"But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel)."

Every blessing of the heaven above and of the deep that lieth under—all are his, to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.

It is very interesting to turn from the 49th of Genesis to the 33rd of Deuteronomy, and compare the blessing of Moses to the tribes of Israel, 238 years afterwards, when the seventy souls had been multiplied into a great nation, the children and successors of the 600,000 fighting men who had fallen in the wilderness in the last forty years of that interval (Num. i. 46). In the list of Moses

Digitized by Google

every tribe has its share of blessing; but the pre-eminence of JUDAH is for the time surpassed by that of LEVI, the priestly tribe.

"They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law. .....Smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again."

Reuben "shall live," and not die; Benjamin "is the beloved of the Lord;" Zebulon may "rejoice in going out," and Issachar "in his tents;" Gad "is blessed and enlarged;" Dan shall "leap from Bashan;" Naphtali is "satisfied with favour;" Asher "dips his foot in oil" at the end of the wilderness journey; but on Joseph and his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, there is not only *repeated all the wealth of Jacob's former blessing*, but there is added the "goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush;" and the sign of the unicorn is given him, for "with his horns (of power) he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth." *He* therefore is not restricted to the land of promise, but at some time of his children's history has much to do with the blessing *on all nations*. Have you ever noticed that the arms of Great Britain are the lion and the unicorn? It has not been observed that the unicorn is used in the arms of any *other* nation.

The blessing of Joseph begins to be fulfilled even in Egypt. His own prophetic dream of his father and his brethren bowing down to him, for which Jacob rebuked him, here comes to pass. The beautiful conduct of Joseph throughout his exaltation is an exquisite story for all times and ages, that touches every heart.

We do not profess to tell it; these chapters of the Story of the Book are only intended to be laid beside an open Bible, and to point to the pictures drawn by the finger of God, bringing together a few

Digitized by Google

general things about them which ought to be known by those who have few books and little time to search for themselves.

With regard to Israel as a family of shepherds, the sheep-walks of Goshen were ceded to them where they might dwell apart, because, as Joseph informed them, every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians (Gen. xlii. i.) We find figures of shepherds on the soles of Egyptian sandals to indicate that they wished to tread them under their feet. It is remarkable that Pharaoh bids Jacob's sons dwell in the land of Goshen, "because it is the best of the land"; and it is for other reasons concluded that he was himself one of the shepherd kings who had conquered Egypt, and who was again expelled by Amosis the Liberator—the king who "knew not Joseph." In the Book of Exodus xii. 40, it is said that "the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was 430 years." That this 430 years comprises the whole period from the call of Abraham to the Exodus, we learn from St. Paul's comment, in his Epistle to the Galatians (iii. 16, 17), who shows that this date extends from the covenant of promise to the giving of the Law.

It is natural to ask if there is any satisfactory evidence *from the monuments of Egypt* of the existence of the Israelites at the period when Scripture chronology suppose them to have been there, between B.C. 1706 and B.C. 1491.

We need not expect to find the word ISRAEL in the Egyptian papyri—that would probably be a name used by the people in speaking of themselves, as GOD'S name for them; but they were long known to foreigners only as THE HEBREWS. Joseph is spoken of as a Hebrew (Gen. xxxix.); the nation as Hebrews, in Pharaoh's order (Exod. i.) They were

Digitized by Google

not known as Jehudim (Jews) until after the separation of the ten tribes under Jeroboam.

Two documents exist in the Museum of Leyden which speak of a *stranger* race in Egypt occupied in building works, and these records date from the reign of Rameses II. This hieroglyph reads, APERI-U, or HEBER-IM, the Hebrews. Egyptian pictures for words are called hieroglyphs.



APERI-U.

A Prussian consul has lately deciphered papyri which have reference to the building of Pithom and Raamses, by the Apuras, Hebrews; and there is a rock inscription in the Valley of Ham Surat which mentions the labours of 800 Hebrews in the stone quarries. The figures accompanying the inscription are of Jewish type, and distinguished by a long beard from their Egyptian overseer. The bondage of the children of Israel is represented also on the tomb of Rekshare, the chief architect of the temples at Thebes. The faces of the Jews it is impossible to mistake; their bodies are covered with splashes of clay; the Egyptian taskmaster is seated with his heavy baton, whose blows would certainly visit some weary slave, resting a moment from his toilsome task of making bricks. Some of these very bricks, *mixed with straw*, are seen in the British Museum.

The inscription at the top of the picture to the right reads, "Captives brought by his majesty to build the temples of the Great God."

Rameses was a family name, like Pharaoh, borne by many kings, and it is not easy to fix their several dates. While these are, as it were, "blotted out,"—the names of *two women are recorded* for ever in the Bible, SHIPHRAH and PUAH, who feared God, and risked their own safety in the days of persecu-

Digitized by Google

tion, saving alive the infants of the Hebrews whom they were called to destroy. The last king of the nineteenth dynasty, Si Ptah Menephtha, "the light of the sun," was not buried in his own tomb, and *he* may have been the Pharaoh who perished in the Red Sea.

The prophet Isaiah, writing 800 years after the Exodus of Israel, puts this song into the mouth of Judah:—

"O Lord our God, lords beside Thee have had dominion over us [and this must have especially included Egypt].

"Dead they shall not live; deceased they shall not rise: therefore hast Thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish." (Isa. xxvi. 13, 14.)

There are two or three closing particulars yet to notice concerning Egypt. Let us look at the 19th of Isaiah, written more than 900 years after the death of Joseph: it refers to the "princes of Zoan," and wise counsellors of Egypt; and the "perverse spirit that became mingled in the midst of them," so that the country was caused to err in all its works (ver. 11 to 14), and the counsel being destroyed the people were to seek to idols, and charmers, and wizards, and familiar spirits (ver. 3), and the *very name of Egypt* was to be held for a *symbol of idolatry and worldliness*, "a place where the Lord was crucified," set side by side with Sodom, in the Book of the Revelation xi. 8:

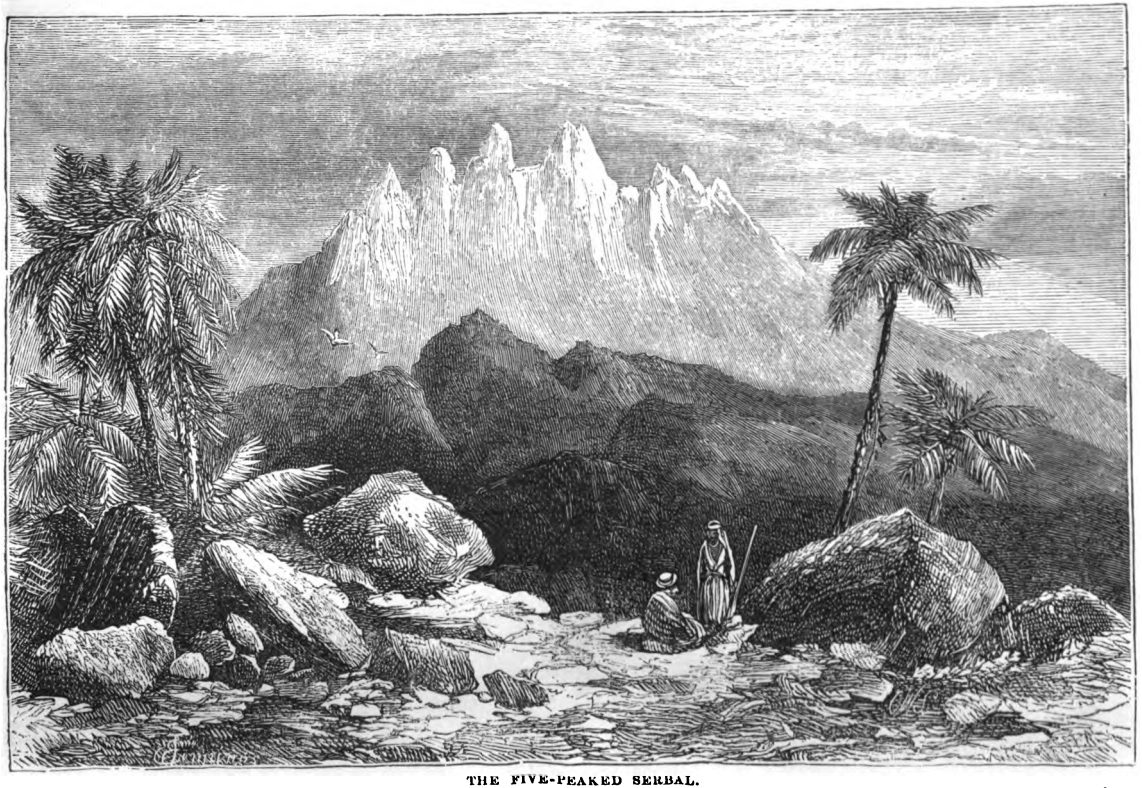
"The great city which *spiritually* is called Sodom and Egypt;"

and where there was *no* crucifying of the flesh with its affections and lusts.

Yet in Egypt, as in this present world, the Lord would train Israel and educate Moses. The Lord JesusHimself, as an infant, was carried there, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." (Hosea xi. 1.)

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



THE FIVE-PEAKED SERBAL.

Digitized by Google

THE TIMES WHEN THE PENTATEUCH BEGAN TO BE WRITTEN.

MOSES, "THE SERVANT OF GOD."

No. VI.

In the first five tracts of this series we have only led our readers to the study of the *first* book in the Bible, Genesis, or, "the book of the beginning." But it is a book comprising the story *of two thousand three hundred and sixty-nine years*, ending with the death of Joseph. In its fifty chapters is included the whole history of the world before the Flood ... ... 1656 years.

The space between the Flood and Abram	352	„
And that between Abram's birth and Joseph's death	361	„
	2369	

There is no other inspired book which represents such a space of time.

The book of Exodus, or the book of "the going out" from Egypt, comprises but 144 years—and 63 of these up to the birth of Moses are signalized by one event recorded in the first chapter; that vast multiplication of the people of Israel, which was so grievous to the new king of Egypt, who "knew not Joseph," and which led to his murderous edict to destroy all their new born sons.

Among these babes devoted to destruction, one, strange to say, is saved by Pharaoh's own daughter.

Digitized by Google

There is an obelisk at Thebes, which is still standing, while the colossus of Rameses lies low. On this obelisk are inscribed such titles as "Lady of both Countries;" "Great Royal Sister;" "PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER!" There is but one queen regent in the royal lists, and this is therefore doubtless the "Pharaoh's daughter" of Exodus, the princess Termuthis, who had power to influence a jealous priesthood to initiate Moses, her supposed heir, in all the wisdom of Egypt. From her Moses receives his Egyptian name, which signifies, "drawn out of the water."

He was a "goodly child," "exceedingly fair," having a body and mind prepared of God for the especial inhabitation of His Divine Spirit (Isa. lxiii. 11), and perhaps his greatest qualification for this matchless privilege, also given him of God, is outlined by another hand in the transcription of his book of Numbers. In chapter xii., verse 3, it is remarked, within parentheses, as it could not have been by himself:—

"(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth.)"

The scribe who closes the book of Deuteronomy, declares,

"There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."

The author of all evil had said to the first pair when tempting them to eat of the forbidden fruit, "Ye shall be as gods," but he had no power to keep such delusive promise to his victims.

What does the Lord say to Moses?

"Thou shalt be to thy brother Aaron instead of God." (Ex. iv. 16.)

"And see, I have made thee as a God to Pharaoh" (Ex. vii. 1); and behold it was so. Moses was made the first

Digitized by Google

worker of miracles in the world's history. The Lord had chosen "a people," and He had now prepared them a leader, for whom He ordained during the first forty years of his life the education of a court, and a training in whatever wisdom was left in idolatrous Egypt; an advantage which was likely to have been counterbalanced by the "pleasures of sin," had not Jehovah given him a heart to renounce them, and possibly to forego the heirship of the Egyptian crown.

"By faith.....choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God.....and esteeming the reproach of CHRIST greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.....by faith too forsaking Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." (Heb. xi. 25—27.)

The day of Christ which Abraham saw, in vision of the future, must also therefore have been revealed to Moses.

From the tuition of the palace, however, Moses was withdrawn by the hand of his Mightiest Teacher, when forty years of age, and sent, as we learn from Acts vii. 30, for just as long a space of time, to be a stranger in the wilderness of Arabia —in the simplicity of desert and shepherd life, to forget much probably, and learn more; here his mind was enriched by meditation, and his soul fed in obscurity and solitude. It may have been here that the Spirit of the living God instructed and prepared him to write the Book of Genesis, from whose first page a child may learn more in an hour than all Egypt's wise men knew without it by the study of their lives. Perhaps Moses possessed earlier documents, handed down through his grandfather Levi; but whether he did or not, the "Lord was with him" in his task, and has preserved the fruit of his inspired labour to this day. He wrote the only ancient history we can trust, the one by which all others must stand or fall.

Digitized by Google

In that long calm oasis of his shepherd life, how the pictures of Egypt must have passed before his memory! The land of Midian lay around the eastern gulf of the Red Sea, and was supposed to have been settled by the posterity of Midian, fourth son of Abraham and Keturah. You will find it marked in two places in the maps of Arabia and Eastern Palestine, pp. 14 and 44. The Midianites were a wandering race, like the Ishmaelites, and were scattered along the district north of Arabia, and east of the Jordan. They had a patriarchal priest or prince named Jethro, his seven daughters watered their flock by a well, like Rachel of old; and when Moses, like Jacob, assisted them in *their* task, they supposed him an Egyptian.

One of those seven daughters, Zipporah, became his wife, and the name of the firstborn son proclaimed the father's feeling, Gershom, "a stranger here," for as he kept the flock of his father-in-law, his heart must often have ached at the stray tidings of the oppression of Israel. His people were in a "furnace of iron" (Deut. iv. 20), and their "sigh" and "cry," came up into the ear of God, while he, their brother, was breathing the free air of the wilderness, till the second course of his education among those sands and mountains had tamed down the fire of his early indignation, and till he became the meekest man upon earth. Surely *then* and *there* he must have studied the patience and impatience of Job; and what human history could better have prepared him for the mission of his forty years to come.

He would also, it is probable, in the desert have been refreshed by the patriarchal piety of Jethro, his father-in-law, for we are much disposed to believe with Dr. Bonar, that Jethro was one of those

Digitized by Google

patriarchal priests in Arabia, who, like Melchisedek in Canaan, and Job in the land of Uz, preserved in different lands the knowledge of the true God before there was any written Revelation, at least any that has come down to us.

We cannot but remark the reverence which Moses afterwards paid to his father-in-law, who is called by various names in Scripture—Jether, or the excellent; while Hobab (Judges iv. 11) may mean "beloved"; in Exod. ii. 18 he is called Reuel; and, again, Raguel, or "friend of God," in Num. x. 29, where we are told that he had a son named Hobab.

Moses did obeisance to him (Exod. xviii. 7) as he restored his wife Zipporah and her sons, when the whole body of the Israelites came and encamped at the Mount of God, in the old district so well known to Moses in his forty years of solitude; and then Jethro rejoiced with his son for all the goodness that the Lord had shown to Israel, and declares his patriarchal knowledge that the Lord is greater than all gods.

Jethro further takes a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God, provides a feast, and calls to it Aaron and the elders of Israel; and with his blessing to Moses we may connect St. Paul's comment, that "the less is blessed of the better." Jethro mingles his counsel with such words of paternal authority and wisdom as would imply a far greater age than Moses, who, it will be remembered, was then himself eighty years old. With much sagacity and experience, and with affectionate solicitude, he says, on observing the constant consultations of the people with their leader: "The thing that thou doest is not good; thou wilt surely wear away"; and suggests a mode of effectual help from others; and his ad-

Digitized by Google

vice was so admirable and well timed, that Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and "did all that he said."

We introduce this after-passage in the life of Jethro because of his being an example of what was known and believed in PATRIARCHAL TIMES, which, we must remember, comprehended an immense period of the history of the world. They were AS LONG as the TIMES OF THE GENTILES, if we count our own period *back*—beyond the coming of the Lord—to about 660 B.C., when the chosen nation was pronounced rejected, because of the sin of Manasseh. And if we would study the Bible aright we must endeavour to realize this.

"I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem." (Jer. xv. 4.)

But it was from communion far higher than with Jethro or Job that Moses came forth from the desert prepared to be a leader of his people. Man is never truly great but as brought into conjunction with God Himself. And let us now observe the place and time of the Divine revelation to this *representative* man—the mediator of the Old Mosaic Covenant, as we call it (Gal. iii. 19)—who foreshadowed the Lord Jesus, the Mediator of the New. A "people" were being nurtured in their hard nursery by the Nile, who were to be God's witnesses in the old world to the heathen around them, and whose pilgrimage and settlement would prefigure the experience of *all* God's spiritual sons and daughters to the end of time.

Some readers reject the idea of types, or *prophecy in action*, as altogether visionary and unprofitable; but even these ought to admit that we are always safe in learning from types *when Apostles teach us;*

Digitized by Google

and in the wonderful depths of God's ancient Word there are closed doors into which no hasty reader enters—into which none could have dared to enter unless the key of inspiration had unlocked their Divine mysteries.

Was not Paul surely taught of the Spirit concerning the history of His people when he went for three years into Arabia, as he tells the Galatians? (i. 17.) This wide word "Arabia" must have included the rocks of Edom and Petra, whence Arabians came to the festivals at Jerusalem (Acts ii. 11). Perhaps also his steps were turned to those mountain heights by the Red Sea, once familiar to the footsteps of Moses and Elijah, and hallowed by the presence of God. His allusions to Agar and Sinai are almost surely those of one who had looked upon its peaks.

Let us think of Moses and Paul, the *lawgiver* and the *expounder of the law*, meeting in spirit on the same mountain, and holding fellowship across a space of more than 1,500 years; the intermediate link being Elijah, the great *reviver* of the law in the prophetic period.

It is Paul who, living over again the wilderness pilgrimage of Israel, teaches us that all its incidents happened unto us for ensamples, and also that these typical histories "are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11). He points to the people as commencing their journey by a baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. He calls their manna "spiritual meat," their water from the rock "spiritual drink"; and he adds in plain exposition, "That rock was Christ."

But it is more especially the beloved John, who dilates on Jesus as the "Lamb of God (John i. 29),

Digitized by Google

slain on the altar of Abel, in the sacrifices of Noah and Abraham, and on the Passover night—all shadows of the sacrifice on Calvary, and marking the shed blood of a sinless victim, as the only porch of entrance to the privileges of the chosen people.

The Passover lamb, the heavenly manna, the "living water," the "spiritual rock," were all figures to convey Divine truth to the senses of a race who could only be taught by their senses, who were in their mental childhood: signs from which *they* were to look *forward*, as *we* may learn from them by looking *backward*. They were all introductory to a written law on TABLES OF STONE, which was visibly to form the character of God's child Israel in the desert, but which had been inferentially taught also to the patriarchal world, even through the antediluvian age.

Our Lord reproaches the Sadducees with not knowing those Scriptures which they had received, because they had not deduced the doctrine of a future life from the statement, "I *am* the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." The doctrine of the Resurrection was *there* if they had sought it out.

Let us realize the ground on which Moses and Paul thus meet in spirit. Moses led his flock from the north-eastern gulf of the Red Sea "to the back side" (or the south) of the desert of El Tih, in stony Arabia, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb, or, literally, Horeb-ward (Exod. iii. 1). We are told that Horeb is the name for the *whole* region; and you perceive there is a "mount of God" mentioned before the giving of the law. And now THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush, called unto

Digitized by Google

Moses, twice repeating his mortal name; and when Moses said, "Here am I," the Divine voice warned him,—

"Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

"Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God."

The next utterance of the Divine voice was full of precious sympathy to the ear of Moses:—

"I have surely seen the affliction of my people; I have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I KNOW THEIR SORROWS; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians."

The burning bush has been identified with the wild acacia, the shaggy thorn-bush—the outgrowth of these wastes—now found only on Mount Serbal. Stewart says he saw not one in the valleys about Gebel Mousa, the monkish Sinai. Here it often tangles by its desert growth into a thicket, as it spreads out its grey foliage and yellow blossoms over the sands. A slightly different species of the tree is the "shittah," or shittim wood, of which the pillars of the tabernacle were made. This tree, though the chief growth of the desert, is very rare in Palestine. The gum which exudes from it is said to be the old Arabian frankincense.

Not in any colossal form, such as the priests of Egypt figured, did God reveal His PRESENCE to Moses; but in accordance with the scene around, from the thicket blazing with unearthly fire amid the rocky ledges of the hill-side. And of how much did the Divine voice speak to its one reverent hearer out of the bush in that single interview! He was told to what land his people should go—whom they should conquer—and how they

Digitized by Google

should be brought forth out of Egypt. Again a window is opened in heaven, as in Job i., and Moses is permitted to perceive the intentions of God, and utters the deep whisper of his humble self-distrust—the "*Who* am I?" following the former "*Here am I*," which marked the instrument "made meet for the Master's service."

Then followed a promise and a token:—

"And He said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God UPON THIS MOUNTAIN."

The whole prophetic history of the Plagues of Egypt is compressed into the revelation from the burning bush. But those forty quiet years of God's teaching had so prepared the mind of Moses against elation at being singled out as a listener to this wondrous "talk from heaven," that his faith had not yet risen to the circumstances, and he still would shrink from the mighty call. But the "Who am I?" is not to hinder the "Here am I"; and at last he goes to tell Jethro, his father-in-law, that he must return into Egypt; and Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

We must not leave in haste this wondrous bush, "burning with fire, yet not consumed," for in this symbol we have a complete picture of Israel's history, as it is told throughout the Word of God. Here was their first experience of affliction and succour from on high, the foreshadow of how many deliverances afterwards. Here, too, was the fulfilling of what God had said to their father Abram, in his vision, amid "an horror of great darkness," of the affliction that should befal his seed in a strange land. The cry of the commencement of the 80th Psalm, written by Ethan, the grandson of Judah, may have been that of Israel in Egypt:

Digitized by Google

"O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?

"Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and givest them tears to drink in great measure."

And of the going forth, it is said in the 81st Psalm,

"I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.

"Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah."

Alas! it is written in the 11th verse,

"But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.

"So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.

"Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!"

Israel in Scripture is variously represented under the symbols of this bramble-bush, and of a vine, a fig-tree, and a cedar; shewing their rise from worldliness to a glory yet to come. Until the Lord took possession of the bramble-bush, how could it bring forth fruit? Jesus Himself makes this reference (Luke vi. 44):

"For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes."

During the interval God had often called Israel His "vine," and His "fig-tree," but when He came to dwell with them and die for them on earth, He found them as from the beginning, a "bramble-bush," which deserved to have been consumed, but yet was not, and was miraculously preserved by His presence in the midst of it, by the "goodwill of Him who dwelt in the bush" (Deut. xxxiii. 16). This "goodwill" was sung in the hallelujahs of the heavenly host to shepherds watching their flocks by night on the plains of Bethlehem. (Luke ii. 14.)

Digitized by Google

Directly He did take possession of the thorn-bush it was called a vine. See the 80th Psalm:

"Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it."

It was of His own pure "goodwill" that God elected the nation of the Hebrews to be His "first-born" among the nations—that He took of the thorn-tree, the shittah, or "shittim wood," to make the framework of the tabernacle; and now He would remember His covenant with the fathers, Abram and Isaac, and Jacob, by keeping His promise "to the selfsame day," at the end of the 430 years—that day, and that night, says Moses, is "to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations." (Ex. xii. 41—42.) They had been afflicted from the time that Laban oppressed Jacob, and served in a land that was not theirs, even before the bondage in Egypt, and now they were brought forth "with a high hand and a stretched out arm."

After the revelation of the burning bush, the first dealing of God was with Moses himself. He convinced him that He could be made at once a worker of miracles, and that he had nothing to do but to be taught and led like a little child in God's hand, with his brother Aaron. He was to become, though he knew it not, a mediator between God and this great and sinful people; he is so called in Scripture. He prayed for them before the Lord. Aaron, his brother, was often appointed to speak for him to the people, and even to work miracles; but Aaron, as it were, dies away with his age and people. Moses is remembered through all time. All great works of leadership must be chiefly accomplished by prayer; then God supplies the able hands to execute what is devised under His direction. Moses was also a prophet, a recorder, a scribe; his education in

Digitized by Google

Pharaoh's court may have given him this faculty. He had to narrate what God's Spirit taught him. And what mighty facts formed his material—how many divine words and acts!

He was now to go and say to Pharaoh, in God's name,

"Israel is my son, even my firstborn: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn." (Ex. iv. 23.)

Immediately after this we read the startling announcement that at this time "the Lord met Moses in the inn and sought to kill him. His wife, Zipporah, it seems, knew why; and she had probably resisted the wish of Moses to circumcise his son Gershom. Now in haste and fear she does it herself, and is for a time exiled from her husband, that he may be left free to his solemn mission.

The Lord cannot claim of the people an observance of which their leader does not set the example. It is now set and followed, for it is observed, Josh. v. 5,

"Now all the people that came out (of Egypt) were circumcised."

Without which the passover could not have been eaten.

"For no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof." (Ex. xii. 48.)

The companion provided of God for Moses, now appears in the story.

"And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him." (Ex. iv. 27.)

During the journey of the brothers into Egypt, the Revelation of the bush was repeated by Moses to Aaron, who thus received the Divine commission; and then began the splendid series of miracles

Digitized by Google

which announced to the great idolatrous nation that the era of the servitude of the Lord's people was over, and that Pharaoh must "let Israel go."

These miracles appear to have been not more necessary to overawe the tyrant than to instruct and impress the bondmen themselves, amongst whom the knowledge and worship of Jehovah seems to have been gradually decreasing. They were in "anguish of spirit and cruel bondage."

Think what miracles they were! it was no common river that was turned into blood, but their sacred, their fertilizing Nile! Think of their thirst when they loathed the water, in all their ponds and pools and cisterns, besides the Nile, for seven days. Think of the "vermin multiplying out of the dust of the desert sands, or the frogs putrefying in heaps by every house, and in every field, to the utter disgust of the cleanliest of ancient nations, clothed in white linen."

And then their gods were smitten—their bull Apis died, their calves, their sacred goats, their crocodiles. The garden of the East, as they thought their verdant strip of country, threading the desert with its meadows and palm-groves,—it was all laid waste, and yet Pharaoh would not let the people go.

But it came at last, that night of the Lord, remembered now so clearly, though it is 3,358 years ago, when one loud frantic funeral wail broke forth, from that of Pharaoh on his throne to that of the captive in the dungeon, for "there was not a house in which there was not one dead"; and at last, seeing, as had been foretold, the firstborn of every family cut down by the God of the Hebrews, Pharaoh hastily gave the midnight word that the Israelites should depart; "Yea, with a strong hand did he drive them out of the land;" for the stretched-out arm of Jehovah

Digitized by Google

had "smitten Egypt with all His wonders," and "THE PEOPLE" forsook "the house of bondage," in number 600,000 fighting men, besides children and a mixed multitude, who followed in their train.



The firstborn of Israel had been passed over, when the firstborn of every house in Egypt was smitten, "the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham" (Ps. lxxviii. 51); and the "Lamb of God," for whose sake they had been spared, was to be slain and fed upon by every household of

Digitized by Google

Jacob for itself; *when this had been done, they could no longer remain in Egypt.* Each was to take of the blood of the lamb, and strike it on the two side-posts* and on the upper door-post of the houses wherein they should eat it, and so escape "the destroyer's" finger of death. Thus between evening and evening Moses and his people "kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the firstborn should touch *them*" (Heb. xi. 28); and the Master, prefigured alike by the slain lamb and the "Angel of the way," more than 1,500 years afterwards, *on the same 14th night of the month Nisan*, directed the passover to be prepared for himself and His disciples. In the course of that night, HIMSELF, the Archetype, was arrested, tried in the morning, and in the next afternoon crucified and laid in the tomb.

The last day of the sojourn in Egypt was over, the predicted 430 years from the call of Abraham complete, and in the 14th night of the month Nisan, our April, then made the first month of the Jewish year, the Lord ordained a new reckoning of time for this His peculiar people.

"This month shall be *unto you* the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year *to you*." (Ex. xii. 2.)

And now, elected by most wonderful love to be a "peculiar treasure" above all people, a "kingdom of priests" and a holy nation, they began their journey as on "eagles' wings." (Ex. xix. 4.)

"Oh, Jacob, saith the Lord, I am the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." (Isa. xliii. 3.)

They were to set forth on wilderness travel where the Lord would "furnish their table," where pure

* The accompanying sketch was made by Miss Whateley from life studies in Egypt.

Digitized by Google

crystal water would burst from the rock for them, and make streams in the desert; the "doors of heaven would be opened," and the "corn of heaven" rained down on THEM, even "angels' food;" or as the margin reads, "the bread of the mighty" (Ps. lxxviii. 25). It was like coriander seed, white, "a small round thing, as small as the hoar-frost on the ground; in taste like wafers made with honey." If they had been content with this ethereal yet substantial aliment, this corn of heaven, they would have known no disease. It was promised—

"The Lord shall bless thy bread and thy water, and I will take away sickness from the midst of thee." (Ex. xxiii. 25.)

They were to be exempt from "the diseases of Egypt;" and as they began this miracle journey, the Lord pointed their eyes to their Leader.

"Behold I send an ANGEL before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.

"Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in *Him*." (Ex. xxiii. 20, 21.)

God had spoken of His "NAME" to Moses from the burning bush in answer to the question:

"They shall say unto me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them?

"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

"And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." (Ex. iii. 13—15.)

Surely into this "NAME" then, into its meaning, all generations should look—that vast I AM, conveyed the idea of the DIVINE PRESENCE, in all things *past*, and all things *future*. The invisible

Digitized by Google

Presence of which the heathen had made their vain symbols, in Egypt and Assyria, was the "Eternal Presence" with that people Israel—type of his spiritual people for ever. Our translators render this name JEHOVAH, but the Jews call it, "The unutterable word." Their historian, Josephus, says that the name was so sacred that it was forbidden to be used, except once in the year before the mercy seat. He adds, that the true mode of pronouncing it was lost, and the Hebrew now in use among the Jews is considerably altered from the time when Moses wrote; the modern Jews never use the word Jehovah, but speak of "Adonai" Lord, in its stead. They had a *superstitious* reverence for it, and have still; they thought it capable of working miracles, and desired to keep it hidden from the heathen. Deep students of Old Testament Scripture say it ought to be written "YAHVEH," or "He who will be," the name of promise to the chosen nation—of the Christ who would come to fulfil *all* Old Testament prophecies. Paul declares this to be the *end* or *sum* of the conversation and teaching of the Apostles: "JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And our Redeemer Himself conveys to us *His own* rendering of His unutterable name, in the benignant message of Rev. i. 4, through the beloved disciple John:—

"Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come."

And now the Lord placed the sea between "the people" and their enemies. "Their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters" (Neh. ix. 11). This was the miracle that crowned all the other ten. The firstborn of Egypt had perished, but the burial alive of her peers and her princes must here attest the power of Jehovah,

Digitized by Google

and humble the pride of the kingdom whose Pharaoh had defied "the Holy One of Israel."

How is the crossing described in the song of Moses?

"With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together.
The floods stood upright as an heap;
The depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.
The enemy said: I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil.
I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.
Thou didst blow with thy wind; the sea covered them;
They sank as lead in the mighty waters."

(Ex. xv. 8—10.)

And thus they set forth on their way to Sinai—to the mountains of Horeb where Moses had fed his flocks, and where the Lord had met him, and told him his people should serve God "on that mountain." We give you a picture, not of the monkish Sinai on which the Roman emperor Justinian built a convent 600 years after Christ, but of the five-peaked Serbal, which has, as many believe, greater claims to be considered the mountain of the Law-giving. This is not a point on which all are agreed, and the exact position of the sacred spots of earth are almost all contested, in order, perhaps, that no place should be the object of a vain and idolatrous worship.

Henceforth this wonderful people, going forth into the desert through those crystal walls of water, had no sooner experienced hunger, than bread was rained from heaven for them, and the bitter spring of the wilderness was sweetened for their sake. This spring is still existing, and is called *Ain Howara*, the bitter well. They crossed over in one night from Africa to Asia, left the desolate and despoiled land of Egypt, and came out into the free desert,

Digitized by Google

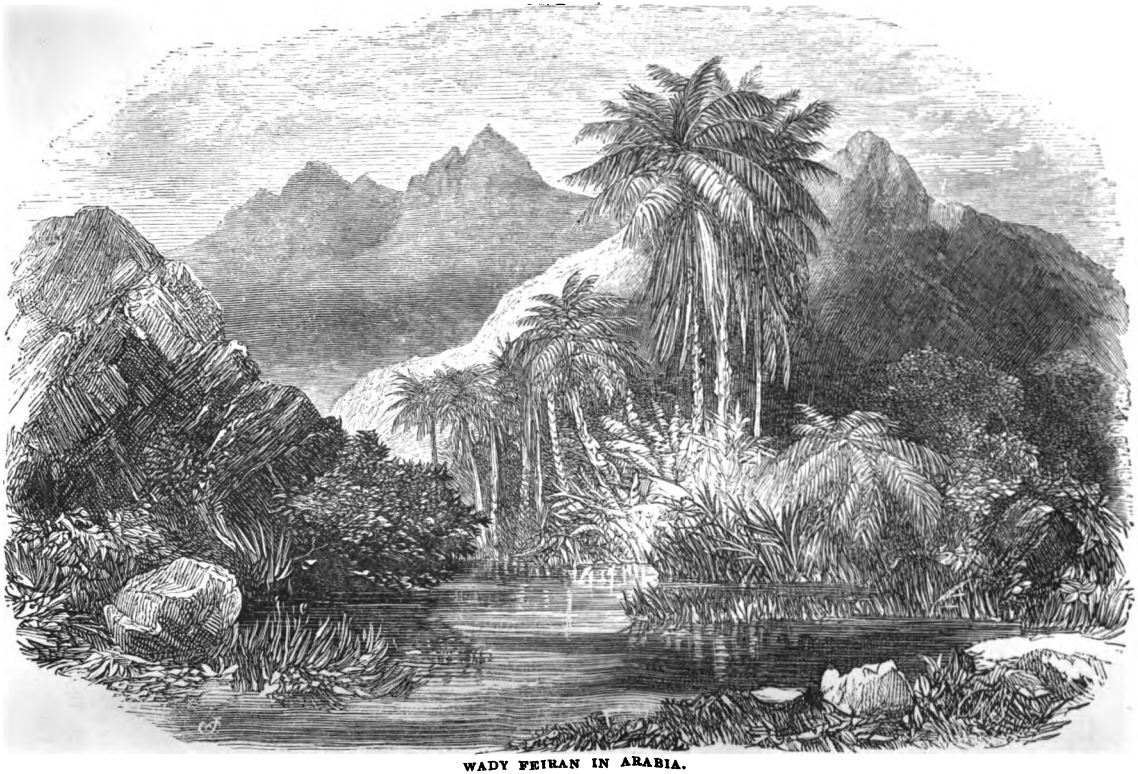
to serve the Lord their God among mountain ranges of wild and awful grandeur. Eye-witnesses have thus described them.

"I stand," says one traveller, "upon one of the peaks of Sinai, where Moses stood when he talked with the Almighty. Can this naked rock have been indeed the witness of that great interview between man and his Creator, on the morning that was ushered in with terrible thunders and lightnings, with the thick clouds resting on the mountain's brow? Yes! This is the holy mountain; and no fitter place on all the earth could have been chosen, for the manifestation of Divine power. I have stood on the summit of the giant Etna, and looked over the clouds floating beneath it,—upon the bold scenery of Sicily. I have climbed Vesuvius, and looked down upon the waves of lava, and the ruined and half-recovered cities at its foot: but these are nothing compared to the terrific solitude and bleak majesty of Sinai. It is a perfect sea of desolation. Not a tree, or shrub, or blade of grass is to be seen upon the bare and rugged sides of innumerable mountains, heaving their naked summits to the skies; while the crumbling masses of granite around, and the distant view of the Syrian desert, with its boundless waste of sands, form the wildest and most dreary, the most terrific and desolate picture the imagination can conceive."

Other travellers describe the view from the summit of Serbal as the grandest, though the most desolate, to be found upon the earth's surface. The eastern-most and highest peak is ascended by a mighty flight of rock stairs which wind round its shoulder.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



WADY FEIRAN IN ARABIA.

Digitized by Google

THE TIMES WHEN THE PENTATEUCH BEGAN TO BE WRITTEN.

FROM EGYPT TO SINAI.

No. VII.

IT is well for us who can look back upon the life of MOSES from the heights of the New Testament days. The last time he is named in Scripture is more than 1500 years after his death, in the Revelation of Jesus Christ unto the Apostle John. The song of Moses, "the servant of God," is sung on the "sea of glass," to "harps of gold," with a yet greater song, "the song of the Lamb," "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The song is thus summed up in the book of Revelation (xv. 3, 4):—

"Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."

This is also the spirit of the song in Exodus xv., when God's judgments were made manifest on Egypt, and when "all nations" were Moab and Edom, and Canaan and Assyria. Those who sing the song of Moses must be the children of Israel. (See Rev. xiv. 3; and vii. 4.)

Let us now go back to his first song. We have seen how the Israelites entered the Red Sea as a nation of slaves, and emerged from it as free men,

Digitized by Google

for their oppressors lay all "dead on the sea shore," and we must now follow them in their pilgrimage, after their song of triumph in the 15th chapter of Exodus.

We hear but of *three* songs in the wilderness: the song after crossing the Red Sea, the song of the well at Beer-sheba, and the song before the ascent of Nebo. There are thirty-nine years between the first and the last song of praise. We complain, as "the people" did, oftener than we give thanks, during the process of *our* training in the wilderness, and while the Egyptian in our characters is dying out under God's discipline; but when the lesson is taught us to say in all things, "Not our will, but thine be done," we are near to the Promised Land. We have to learn to draw water from the wells of salvation, and the way to do this is to betake ourselves diligently to the study of God's holy Word. We must dig into that well, from whence all the streams of truth flow. It is not enough to know from the Scriptures merely the way of life. They must be *searched* for those truths that lie deeper beneath their surface.

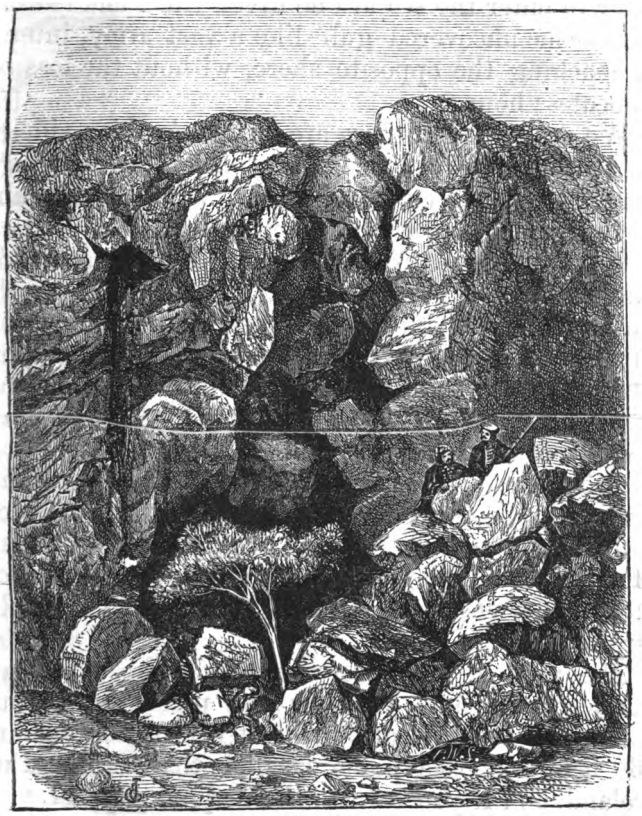
Have we not observed that Christians whose minds are occupied by the study of God's Word, and who are patiently digging into it, are the happiest and most fruitful Christians? Their "hearts are enlarged," they will seldom be offended or perplexed about their own frames and feelings; they are drinking of the living water that springs up as they dig. Most of the evils within us and around us, arise from our PARTIAL knowledge of the Word of God.

We must realize "the people" as a whole nation encamped on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea, in Wady Tarawik, or "The Valley of the Nocturnal Travellers." Here is commemorated by its Arabic

Digitized by Google

name "the night" of Exod. xii. 42; that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

Captain Moresby has laid down Wady Tarawik in his chart as Wady Mousa, corresponding with "Ayun Mousa," the wells on the opposite coast.



AYUN MOUSA, THE WELLS OF MOSES.

Here is a sketch of Ayun Mousa, or the Wells of Moses, by Miss Whateley, during her stay in Cairo.

Digitized by Google

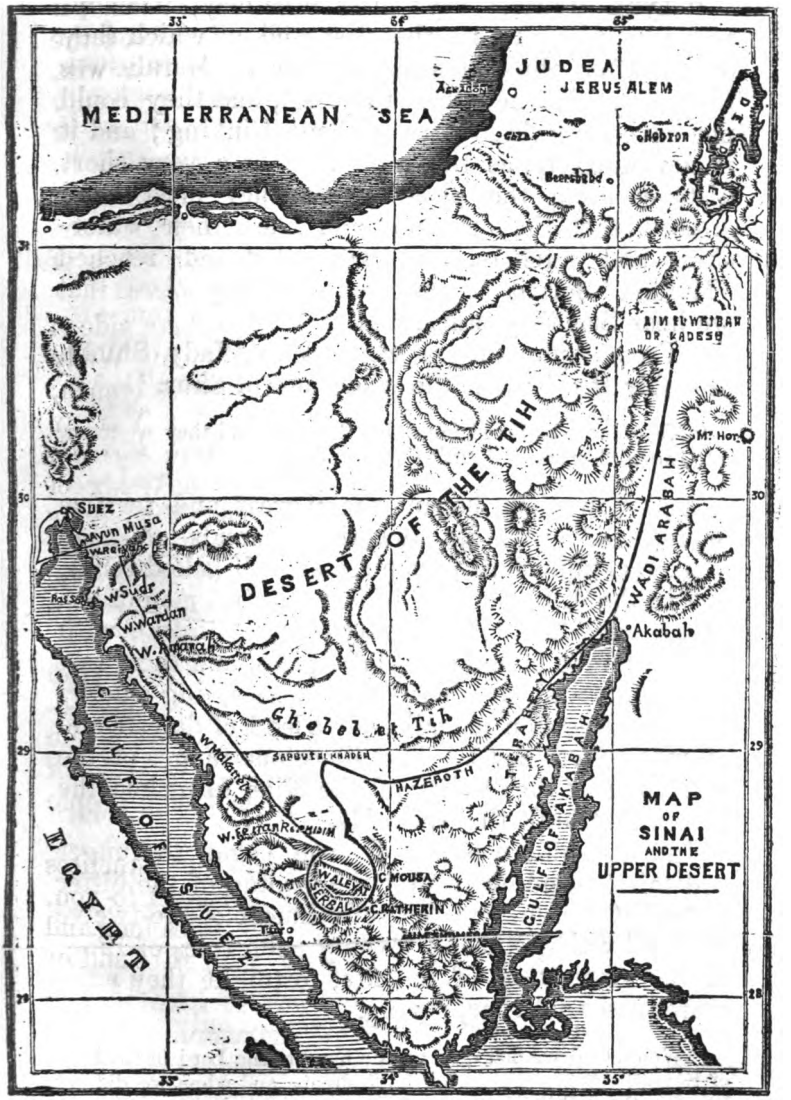
"When I asked our sheikh," says Dr. Wilson, "if this name was correct, he said, 'This is indeed the path of our Lord Moses.'" The Wady Tarawik, or Mousa, is eighteen miles in length—the only level and open space in which two millions of people with their tents and flocks could encamp, in order to enter the sea at one given time, and march across the uncovered gulf like a vast army, intent on reaching the opposite shore, without the loss of a needless hour.

We are told that there are on the Arabian side of the sea, six "wadys," or landing places, facing Wady Tarawik:—1. Ayun Mousa. 2. Wady Reiyaneh, derived from *ar rani*, "the people," THE VALLEY OF THE PEOPLE. 3. Wady Kurdhiyeh, from *Kardah*, THE VALLEY OF THE CONGREGATION. 4. Wady el Ahtha, from *ati atiu*, "a pilgrim," THE VALLEY OF THE PILGRIMS. 5. Wady Sudr, from *sadar*, OUT OF THE WATER, "a road leading men up from the water." 6. Wady Wardan, from *wardun*, THE VALLEY OF DESCENT INTO THE WATER.

"Can these local names," it is asked, "facing the very scene of the Scripture miracle, have come together by chance? Can the Scripture terms, the 'People,' the 'Pilgrims,' occur on the very scene of the Exode, yet have no reference to God's people Israel?"

The map of the desert in which the Israelites wandered for forty years, is now presented to you, it includes a region of but about 160 miles long and 130 broad, a space much smaller than Scotland or Ireland, and if you turn to the map on page 14, you will see this same region represented only as a tiny corner of the wide country of Arabia.

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

"Ayun Mousa," says Miss Whateley, "is supposed by many to be the first well at which they drank after thus crossing the sea. Marah was three days' journey from the coast, and they could not have gone three days without drinking; and it is not unlikely, as this well is only a very short distance from the place where they must have crossed, that they stopped and filled their water-skins and pitchers, and with that aid reached 'Marah;' for it is only on arriving *there* that we hear that they murmured.

"From Ayun Mousa we pass to Wady Shudh, probably the same as the wilderness of Shur."

"Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur."—Ex. xv. 22.

And now then began the "great and terrible wilderness," with its towering mounds of rough sand, its stupendous precipices of half-baked rocks, and in the distance wild brown spectral mountains. These were the "ragged rocks" (Isa. ii. 21), with their summits of spikes or tall spires, and their vast sides furrowed by enormous quarries, dug side by side in succession for miles—"a land of deserts and of PITS" (Jer. ii. 6). The limestone ranges of the Tih, so near the Valley of the Nile, furnished the stones that built the pyramids.

In this wilderness Israel soon began to hunger and thirst; and even after the healing of the bitter waters of Marah, and the refreshment of the twelve wells of water, and the seventy palm trees of Elim, at the expiration of the first fortnight they murmured a second time, saying,

"Would God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt! When we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full." (Ex. xvi. 3.)

Digitized by Google

They forgot it had been the bread of suffering and slavery, and oh! how undeservedly did God reply to this "murmuring" with the mercy of the "manna," and thereby teach them afresh the law of His Sabbath which had been first instituted in Eden. They were to gather up a double portion of this sustenance on the sixth day for the seventh. The prophet Ezekiel, in referring to the early portion of their history, records the words of Jehovah, "I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them" (Ezek. xx. 12), and in the same chapter it is *four* times mentioned.

"My Sabbaths they greatly polluted....for their eyes were after their fathers' idols."

But they were on their way to the mountain of the Law-giving, and having murmured and received the manna in the wilderness of Sin, it is said they pitched next in REPHIDIM, and that there was no water for the people to drink; and again they chide with Moses, saying,

"Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" (Exod. xvii. 3.)

We have scarcely an idea in the cool countries of the West what thirst like theirs could be.

"It is impossible to conceive the weariness" (says Bartlett in his "Forty Days in the Desert") "that is felt by the solitary wanderer in this great and terrible wilderness. Ravine succeeds to ravine, with its bed of sand or gravel, overhung with mountains, whose bold, awful, abrupt forms, with their colouring of brown, black, red, and yellow, glare under the fiery sun like a portion of some early world untenanted by man. The silent footfall of the camel passes noiselessly from morn to night among the voiceless crags. It is then we remem-

Digitized by Google

ber and realize the incidents of Israel's toilsome march, and understand their horror at being transported from verdant Egypt into the heart of solitudes so deep.

> 'So lonely 'tis that God Himself
> Scarce seemeth there to be.'

"How blissful is the sudden change to WADY FEIRAN! 'Most like a poet's dream' it burst upon us. The cliffs around still towering indeed bare and perpendicular, but instead of a gravelly valley there arose as by enchantment tufted groves of palm and fruit trees. Presently a stream of running water led us on to the shade and the verdure of the Valley of Feiran.

"There in the heart of the wilderness of rock and sand, when weary of the stunted bush and nauseous scanty pool, I pitched my tent beneath a group of palms which bent to shelter it; the spring came down the valley, and, rippling among green sedges, formed a small transparent basin at the foot of a fragment of limestone rock fallen from the mountain wall above, and was decorated like a natural altar with freshest foliage. The camels were scattered about the bowery thickets, cropping the thick blossom with avidity, and the Arabs revelled around.

"My oasis of palms was not a solitary group. On stepping out from my tent I was in an almost tropical wilderness. In the palm groves of Egypt the stumps are trimmed and straight, but here this most graceful of trees is all untended; its boughs spring direct from the earth, and form tufts and avenues and over-arching bowers, through which sunlight falls tremblingly on the shaded turf. Among them some few branches shooting upright,

Digitized by Google

lift high above the rest their lovely coronal of rustling fans and glowing branches of dates. Some droop to the ground like wavy plumes, others form mossy alleys resounding with the songs of birds. The wind plays over the rustling foliage with the gentlest murmurs; fig, pomegranate, and acacia mingle their foliage with the palm, and here in its season is seen the waving corn. Where else did Israel grow the corn that was ordered, in Lev. ii. 14, to be offered with their meat-offerings to the Lord?

"Now for the ownership and sole possession of such a stream, was it not probable that the sons of the desert would speedily strive?

"'Then came Amalek,' says Moses, 'and fought with Israel in Rephidim,' Exod. xvii. 8."

There *was* an ancient Amalek race for whom we may look back as early as Abram's time (Gen. xiv. 7), and it is said they were descended from HAM, but a second race so called were descended from Esau, Jacob's brother; and there would have been quite time for the multiplication of this race into a warlike host in 150 years ere they fought Israel in Rephidim, as we find that in the same period the tribe of Ephraim could muster 40,500 fighting men (Num. i. 33). Amalek is spoken of in Judges as in connection with Moab and Midian; and "all the children of the east, lying in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels as the sand of the sea." They seem to have followed Israel out of the wilderness of Sin, and fallen upon their rear while the foremost were pressing towards the newborn flood. "He met thee by the way," says Moses afterwards to Israel (Deut. xxv. 18), "and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee. When thou wast faint and

Digitized by Google

weary, and he feared not God. . . . . Therefore thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

In the prophecy of Obadiah it is said of Edom, or Esau (the grandfather of Amalek),

"For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever....."

In the first battle of Israel with their enemies success appears to have depended entirely on Moses, who watched the strife from a neighbouring hill, with the rod of God in his hand (Exod. xvii. 8, 13). On the appeal to Divine power, symbolized by the lifting of that rod, everything rested.

There exists a remarkable lonely hill, called Jebel Muthbah, overlooking the valley of Feiran, (which is supposed to be the scriptural Rephidim) at the point where Wady Natet and Wady Feiran join, and which would answer exactly to the hill where Moses sat, while Aaron and Hur held up his weary hands. The broad plain below, is said by Dr. Stewart, who has seen it, to be just fitted for a battle field; and on its borders he saw cairns or heaps of stones thrown together, which, according to the Arabs, are very ancient—and they were accustomed to call them, in their language, "The graves of the Jews," though Stewart thinks them quite as likely to have been the graves of Amalek, here defeated by the prayer of Moses and the early prowess of Joshua.

Dr. Stewart journeyed on through the countless windings of the valley, thinking of that hill of prayer, and how the stream from the smitten rock must have run down this valley towards the thirsty, murmuring crowds; and that along it old Jethro brought his daughter and his grandsons to

Digitized by Google

restore them to the leader of the Lord's hosts. He pressed onward to the site of the old city of Feiran, which was a place of great importance about 500 years after Christ, and for many centuries afterwards; being the seat of a bishop and the abode of a Christian population long ere the patronage of a Roman emperor bade Ghebel Mousa to be considered the true Sinai, and when SERBAL was reckoned the "Mount of God."

There is no mention of the name of Feiran in Scripture, but there *is* of "Paran," which is considered, by the best geographers to be the old form of the same.

"Wady Feiran (or Paran) cannot be Rephidim," say some, "for there must always have been water here," and

"In Rephidim there was no water for the people to drink."

Yet was it not surely once the waterless waste which the 17th chapter of Exodus describes it? and are we not told of the time when the streams which have nursed the palm groves of this noble oasis *first sprang into being?* We can look for the evidence in the Book of Psalms.

See Ps. cv. 41:—

"He opened the rock: and the waters gushed out: they ran in the dry places like a river."

In Ps. lxxviii. 15, 16:—

"He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths.

"He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers."

The latter part of Psalm cvii. relates exclusively to Israel in the wilderness, and its record is as follows:—

Digitized by Google

"He maketh the wilderness a standing water,
And water springs of a dry ground;
And there He setteth the hungry,
That they may build them a city to dwell in:
That they may sow their land and plant vineyards,
To yield them fruits of increase."

"Now Wady Feiran is attested to be the only spot in the Sinai desert where water-springs run like rivers; where an ancient city exists, or ever did exist; or where corn did, or ever could grow."

Do we not read the history of its miraculous source in Exod. xvii. in the hour when God said, "*I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb.* Take with thee the elders of Israel, and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river; take it in thine hand and go." Was not this the converse miracle to that of the Red Sea? The Lord bound the sea by the rod of Moses, and made a dry path through its billows, and again He burst rocky bars, and let flow "the fountain of Israel," which Paul tells us followed them in them in their wanderings, a type of Christ; they doubtless returned to its refreshing borders and also to the neighbouring Wady Hebron for many parts of the thirty-eight years during which they did *not* journey to the Promised Land—and in this time each of them who was older than twenty when he came out of Egypt, except Joshua and Caleb, found a grave in the scorching sands.

It is certain, from Deut. ix. 21, that "a running brook descended out of Mount Horeb" after Moses had smitten it, and that this brook became a broad stream in the valley beneath, upon whose waters Moses cast the dust of the golden calf, and which gave space for all the children of Israel to drink of the waters thus sprinkled. The stream of Wady Feiran runs now for six miles through the valley.

And upon that fertile valley (the Arab paradise of palms) the five rugged spires of SERBAL still

Digitized by Google

frown down in their magnificence. The Israelites appear to have left the borders of the stream and gone on to the desert of Sinai (Ex. xix. 2), and then Israel camped before the mount. The "wilderness of Sinai" would mean the desert plain around the mountain, whichever mountain the true Sinai might be.

"From Wady Feiran," says Dr. Stewart, "we turned to the right into Wady Aleyat, which leads directly up to the base of Serbal. I should reckon the length of this valley to be about four miles, and there is ample space to have contained the tents of all the tribes of Israel. It is one vast chaos of ruins, of rocks precipitated from the face of the mountain above by some great convulsion of nature. The face of the perpendicular summit towers 2000 feet in height above this mountain valley. From every part of the Wady Aleyat, SERBAL can be seen; there are no projecting spurs to hide his summits; the precipitous sides rise clear from the rough ground, and the propriety of the inspired description is fully realized, 'the mount that might be touched.'"

These "avalanches" of rock and stone have now so covered Wady Aleyat as to suggest the idea that the clouds must have some time rained down boulders instead of hailstones. Yet it is not deficient in verdure, and scattered over its surface also are the Saut or *Shittah* trees of Scripture, "not one of which trees," says Dr. Stewart, "are found in the plain of El Rahah, or in the Wadys round Gebel Mousa."

There are those who see in these appearances "the standing result and evidence of the shock which the mountain experienced at the GIVING OF THE LAW," when Scripture tells us it was shaken to its foundations—"And the whole mount quaked greatly" (Exod. xix. 18). This must have resembled an earthquake, yet there are no signs of volcanic agency throughout the region. "The

Digitized by Google

earth trembled and shook" (Ps. lxxvii. 18), says the Psalmist long afterwards, in reference to the events of the Exodus; and the witness of Paul follows (Heb. xii. 26), "Whose voice then shook the earth." "The shivered rocks are thrown down by Him," says the prophet Nahum (i. 6). If a certainty of the locality of the Law-giving is still recoverable by actual record in Scripture signs, MOUNT SERBAL IS THE TRUE MOUNT SINAI.

Now let us see what Scripture says about Paran. It mentions Mount Paran and the wilderness of Paran as distinct from the wilderness of Sin on the Edom side, and the wilderness of Shur on the Egypt side of the desert. It was therefore probably more central, and concluded to be the wilderness of El Tih, fronting the ranges of the Horeb mountains—that arid table land of limestone, "that great and terrible wilderness" of Deut. i. 19.

But what does Scripture say of *Mount* Paran? Different travellers, who have only been able to undertake the fatigue and expense of going up one or other of the mountains claiming to be *the true Sinai*, are likely each to suppose it the one they ascended. But God speaks of "Mount Paran"; and if Wady Feiran be Wady Paran, the Mount Paran of Scripture probably looks down upon it, as Serbal does upon Feiran. Moses himself thus far supplies information (Deut. xxxiii. 2):—

"And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words."

The prophet Habakkuk says (chap. iii. 3—6):

"God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth

Digitized by Google

was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light; He had horns coming out of His hand: and there was the hiding of His power. Before Him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at His feet. He stood, and measured the earth: He beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: His ways are everlasting."

There is yet one remarkable feature of this region to notice, which in a very singular manner illustrates the first recorded journey of the Israelites in the wilderness.

All along the line of march you see marked on the map—and *only in that line*, as far as we know at present—there are certain mysterious writings on the rocks, which have excited the attention of travellers from the time of Cosmas, who noticed them about 500 years after Christ. Their *age* and *meaning* are still supposed to be a great problem, but their existence is unquestioned. Cosmas called them Hebrew inscriptions, and considered they had been preserved "for the sake of unbelievers" in Moses. They remained unnoticed till the present century, when Professor Beer of Germany rejected the idea of Cosmas, and supposed them to belong to a little before or after the time of Christ, and to have been made by Nabatheans (Esau's descendants), early Christians or Pagans—by any hands but those of Israel.

The general sense, as rendered by Professor Beer, is as follows:

"Omai, son of Wâl, desires that he may be remembered."

Or,

"Let be remembered for good Aus(u), the son of Hers(u)."

Or,

"Peace be to—so and so."

You may see a specimen of these characters on a

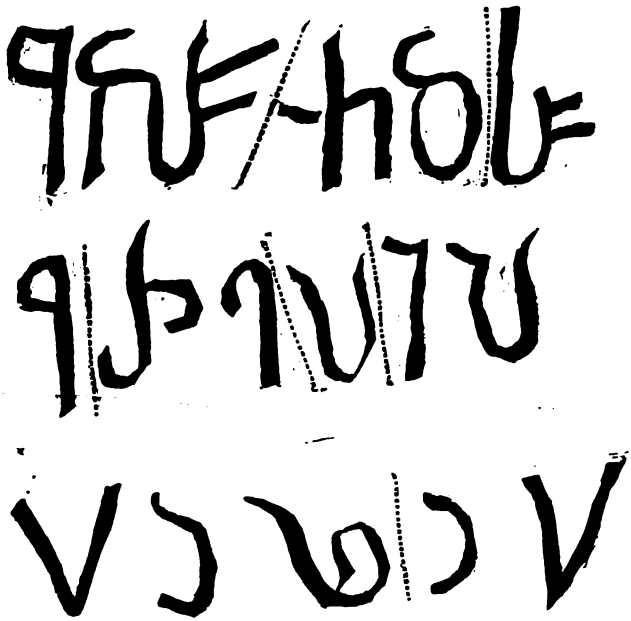
Digitized by Google

fragment of red sandstone on the shelves of the Egyptian Gallery of the British Museum.



SINAITIC INSCRIPTION IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

And here is one on a larger scale—a specimen of 470 similar inscriptions which the French Government caused to be moulded in plaster by M. Lottin de Laval, from the rocks themselves, in the year 1856, and which therefore must be accurate.



SINAITIC INSCRIPTION.

Digitized by Google

Let us notice where these writings are found. Commencing near Suez, the Wadys Wardan, Maghara, Mokatteb, Feiran, and Aleyat, are all full of them—Mokatteb especially, which means "*The Written Valley*"; so is "Wady Aleyat," which leads up to the five-peaked SERBAL, whose two easternmost summits are covered with them also. They are found on the second peak from the west, on the top of the third or central peak, and innumerable inscriptions clothe the northern side of the mountain.

They are written upon hundreds of the fallen stones in Wady Aleyat, so that it seems as if every second stone was inscribed. They are on blocks of trapstone, black on the surface, but lemon-coloured inside; and the black surface throws out the lemon-coloured characters.

It is very remarkable that no inscriptions are found either on Gebel Mousa or on Mount St. Catherine.

What do they mean? The Rev. Charles Forster, a clergyman of the Church of England, has spent years in attempting to decipher them; and by means of old Arabic, Ethiopic, and Hebrew alphabets, he thinks he reads them, and has written three books upon them; one book he dedicates to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The two first characters on the right hand of each of the specimens we have given you on p. 136 he considers to mean "THE PEOPLE." They are very often repeated everywhere.

On the smaller stone Mr. Forster reads—

"The People kicketh like an Ass;
The People drives to the water JEHOVAH."

And on the larger—

"Causes to descend into the deep valley, MOSES, the Tribes

Digitized by Google

"Leader of the way—he causes to descend into the deep the young ostrich, the sea foaming
"Divides it asunder, power given him by God."

A great number of the inscriptions are attended by a rough drawing of the event or circumstance to which they allude. "The People," "the Tribes," are most often depicted as a restive camel, a wild ass, a wild goat, headstrong and kicking; and are described as reviling, murmuring, or greedy. Unlike the vainglorious Egyptians, from whom they came out, who never recorded their own defects, the whole scope of this rock-witness (if read aright by Mr. Forster) is one extensive epitaph on the generation who fell in the wilderness—the fathers of the race who, better trained and desert-bred, attained the Promised Land. The following is the tenor of the translation given to many of the inscriptions:—

"The people, the Hebrews, lusting after Egypt, fall into commotion."

"The people, a yearling wild ass—headstrong, mindless, and mad."

"The people raileth, reviling, cursing aloud, a braying ass, vociferous."

"The people, a lean, emaciated she-camel, goes forth into the desert a roarer—a she-camel with a murmuring mouth."

"The people devour greedily and enormously."

"Roars the huge unbroken she-camel, angering Jehovah. Rebellious in the burning desert."

"Subdued by thirst, the high-humped she-camel speeds with long steps."

A very large number of the inscriptions also bear testimony to the grand miracles of the Exodus:—

PASSING THROUGH THE RED SEA.

"The sea enters by night the people; the sea, and the waves roaring."

Digitized by Google

"Divideth asunder the leader the sea, its waves roaring. Enter and pass through the midst of the waters, the people."

"The people pass quickly over through terror, like a horse; the soft wet mud at the bottom of the sea."

"Weep for their dead, the enemies; the virgins wailing. The sea pouring down, overwhelmed them; let loose to reflow the waters."

"Fleeth the people; descend into the deep the tribes. Enter the waters, the people."

"The people enter, and penetrate through the midst."

"The people are filled with stupor and mental perturbation, JEHOVAH although their keeper and companion."

WATER FROM THE ROCK.

Numbers of the writings are said to refer to the gift of water from the rock:—

"The people the hard stone satiates with water, thirsting."

"The hard rock water—a great miracle."

"The people wending on their way drink, drinking with prone mouth, gives them to drink again and again, JEHOVAH."

"The people in the waterless desert, swill drinking again and again, the people a roarer, the water flowing in the desert, drink like the camel in one long draught."

Mr. Forster's translations, however, though very interesting, are not universally believed in. That the inscriptions *exist* is certain, and on the route of the journey of Israel as described in the Book of Exodus; and therefore we have told you of them.

A learned Jew of the present day makes the following remarks on these inscriptions as alluded to in Scripture:—

"There is a remarkable and interesting episode in the sacred narrative of Num. xi. 25—30. When the Spirit of the Lord had been poured out upon the seventy elders, they went up to the tabernacle to prophesy, two out of their number remaining behind —Eldad and Medad—though the Spirit it is said, rested upon them also, 'and *they were of them that were written.*' This phrase is confessedly obscure.

Digitized by Google

It has been understood to refer to certain tickets or tablets inscribed by Moses with the word 'elder,' and given to each of the seventy as their passport to office."

This learned Jew, to whom of course Hebrew is a native tongue, discovers in the phrase in question a reference to the Sinaitic inscriptions. For the rendering, "They were of them that were written," he would substitute the following, which he says is the *literal* translation of the words: "They were among the cthoobeem, or inscriptions."

"On examining what different travellers have written about the locality of those inscriptions," says Dr. Margoliouth, "I am convinced that Eldad and Medad were then, in that famous region, at the awfully memorable place Kibroth-hataavah, one of the spots where the inscriptions are found."

These curious writings make one think of Job (chap. xix., vers. 23, 24), when we read:

"Oh that my words were now written!....that they were *graven* with an *iron pen* and lead in the rock for ever!"

And Jeremiah xvii. 1, which says:

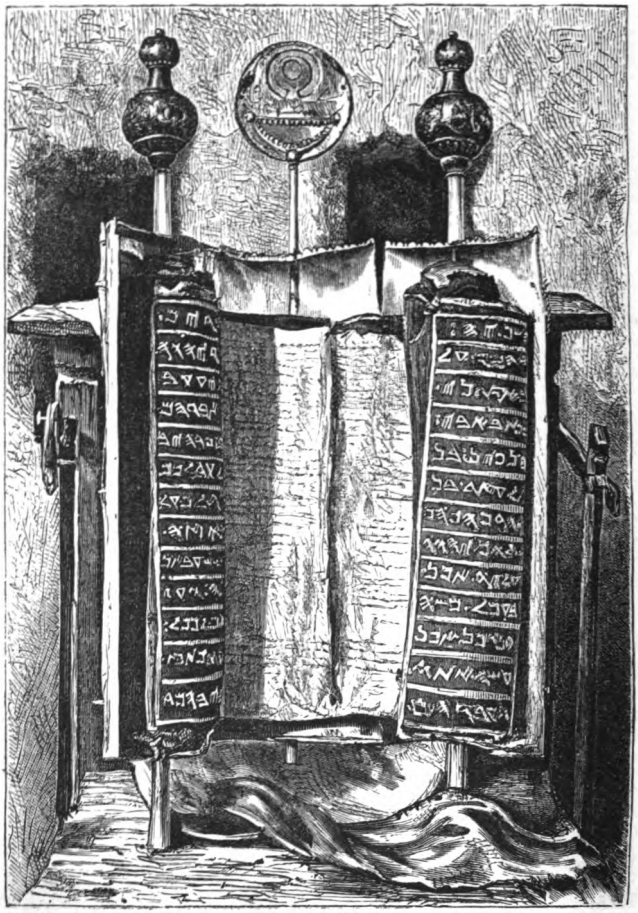
"The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond" (or nails, as the margin reads).

If the age of Job is admitted—and he alludes to such writings—why may not these inscriptions be as old as the hieroglyphs of idolatrous Egypt?

Their numbers are computed by thousands, their extent by miles, and they are often placed fathoms, not feet, above the valley floors. How can they have been the pastime of chance pilgrims or travellers? And if they are the work of the Nabatheans, it is very strange that the great mass of them is found on the *Egyptian* side of the peninsula, in the very route of the Israelitish wanderings as recorded by Moses.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH.

Digitized by Google

THE TIMES WHEN THE PENTATEUCH BEGAN TO BE WRITTEN.

THE GIVING OF THE LAW ON MOUNT SINAI.

No. VIII.

NEVER yet in the history of the world has such another scene been recorded as we find in the 19th chapter of Exodus, when all Israel were assembled in the desert plain before the Mount Sinai, alone with God—with GOD, who had proved to them that HE was the only God, and that *they* were His chosen people.

He had divided the very sea to let them pass into that secret shrine of His presence, and by the natural grandeur of such a miracle had prepared their minds to listen to His mighty words from heaven. The writings of an ancient people remain upon the rocks that witnessed that solemn interview between Jehovah and the trembling sons of men—if Aleyat is the wilderness, and Serbal the Sinai; but we are not yet infallibly assured *who* were the writers, and the *certainty* of the reading is also lost.

On the other hand, there were two Tables of Stone, which were actually "graven" by the finger of God; and though these remain *not*, or have been

Digitized by Google

hidden for ages from mortal sight,* yet the LAW they embodied is certain and true, and is set before the eyes of all nations, in every language into which the books of Moses have been rendered.

Our Lord Jesus, when in the fulness of time He appeared upon the earth, the Jehovah of the wilderness, "taking upon Him the form of a servant," referred to those two tables of the Law, and revealed to a later age the whole spirit and meaning of His *Ten* Commandments, when He simplified them for His disciples into *two*.

"Jesus said unto him" (the lawyer who asked which was the greatest commandment) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Now all the words of men may perish, but "the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

* The Book of Maccabees is one of the Apocryphal, or non-inspired books, which are not included in our common English Bible, but which contain, however, very valuable portions of Jewish history during the 400 years that lie between the closing of the last inspired book of the Old Testament by the prophet Malachi and the Gospel narrative of St. Matthew in the New Testament. In the 2nd chapter of the 2nd book of Maccabees, it is written that the prophet Jeremiah, "being warned of God, "came forth from Jerusalem to the mountain where Moses went "up and saw the inheritance of God" (viz., Nebo, or Pisgah). "And when Jeremiah came thither he found a hollow cave; and "he carried in thither the tabernacle and the ark, and the altar "of incense, and stopped the door. Then some of them that "followed him came up to mark the place, but they could not "find it. And Jeremiah blamed them, saying, The place shall "be unknown till God gather together the Congregation of the "People and receive them to mercy: and then the Lord will "shew these things." (See p. 158 of this Tract.)

Digitized by Google

Those two Tables were an all-comprehending code of duty to God and duty to man; and on this Law, given by God to Moses, *all* law (worth the name), in *all* countries, has more or less been founded.

The first table, containing the *first four* and longest commandments were meant to separate God's people Israel from the heathen corrupters of the truth which Noah taught at Shinar:—

"THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME."

This had been taught in the ten plagues wherewith the Lord had overcome Pharaoh; and the first commandment is introduced by the reminder—

"I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the house of bondage."

The second commandment of God relates also to Himself, and declares His jealousy of His people bowing down to any graven image or likeness of a god, which it was the habit of the heathen nations to make and to worship.

The third commandment forbade the irreverent use of His own Holy Name. The people were to fear (as Moses again tells them—Deut. xxviii. 18) that glorious and fearful name, "THE LORD THY GOD," and forbear to utter it lightly, or "to take that name in vain."

Having thus fenced off His NAME, the fourth commandment of God concerns His DAY—one day in seven. All nations count their time by periods of seven days, which is a most trusty voucher for the truth of Moses. The seventh day had been set apart in Eden, and was doubtless observed in the household of every holy patriarch.

It is afresh and especially mentioned in Exodus as a gift from the Lord to His people, and mentioned by Himself:—

Digitized by Google

"See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days." (Exod. xvi. 29.)

Having thus declared to Israel *first* their duty to HIMSELF, the second table—of the short commandments—begins with their consequent duty to their fellow-men. As if it had been said, "Let the man who has no god before ME—who makes no graven image, even of ME—who reverences my NAME, and thankfully observes my DAY,—let him also manifest the piety of the patriarchal age. Let him honour his father and his mother; and as regards all his fellow-men, let him tread the round of all the moral virtues, and avoid the sins of violence, of impurity, of dishonesty, of untruth, and of secret avarice and selfishness.

"Let him do no murder.
"Let him not commit adultery.
"Let him not steal.
"Let him not bear false witness.
"Let him not covet aught that is his neighbour's."

The law contained in these two tables *spans all ages*. Every child of God to this day aims to keep it, though he does not expect to be saved by doing so. "The law,"—says St. Paul—"the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." And Christ said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, but to fulfil."

The law of Moses chiefly met the corruption of man's heart, and sought to restrain it by a series of "*shall nots*." The first mention of "law" in the Old Testament is when Joseph made a law over the land of Egypt, that Pharaoh should have a fifth part of the harvest (Gen. xlvii. 27), but the Holy Ghost speaks, in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, of

Digitized by Google

Gentiles who having not the law did by nature some things contained in the law, showing the work of the law written in their hearts.

This is a reference surely to relics of the lost image of God in man's soul, and may apply to Noah's generation as well as that of Paul.

It is very interesting to think on what must have been the memories of the world's new fathers coming down from Ararat. They had many memories of *evil;* let us trace from the facts recorded, *how much* of God's law as given by Moses, must have been written upon their hearts and consciences.

The law of the Sabbath, the seventh day of rest, had been revealed to Adam by example, and the law of holy marriage. Shem and Japheth evidently respected the law of reverence to parents, when Ham would have had them despise Noah. Noah had been in the sight of God a "just" and an "upright" man, and, as far as he could, had commanded his household after him; therefore as knowing good from evil, he and his would have respected the laws of *truth* and the rights of *property.* They would have thought it wrong to steal, to take a neighbour's wife, to bear false witness, or to covet what was not theirs. In their hearts were written the germs of most of the commandments afterwards uttered by angels from Mount Sinai.

At the time of the new covenant with Noah a law was given with emphasis against murder, and against eating blood for food; the latter injunction being observed by the posterity of Shem at the present day.

The Apostles tell us that

"Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John iii. 4.)

That

"Death entered into the world by sin." (Rom. iv. 12.)

Digitized by Google

And that

"Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression."

In Adam all die, and if *death* reigned, we know that *sin* reigned, not only for the sake of Adam's sin, but from the transgression by corruption and violence, of a law of purity and mercy originally written in their hearts, when they were created in the image of God. We are sure that these principles were well understood and witnessed unto, by the sons of God, and especially by the line of Seth. Though not preserved *to us* in any written code, the patriarchs, the father-rulers, must have announced them to their households, and sin was the transgression of that law.

We will now try and imagine from inspired description, the scene of the Law-giving from heaven to the people of Israel, one of the most awfully sublime in the annals of the world. King David refers to it 500 years afterwards, in his Psalm lxviii. 17:

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angel: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place."

Moses alludes, as we have seen, to the presence of "ten thousand of saints" (Deut. xxxiii.), who must have been the redeemed of the patriarchal age. He had brought the people forth out of the camp to meet with God (xix. 17). They had departed from Rephidim, or Wady Feiran, and were "camped before the mount in the desert of Sinai (xix. 2), which was probably," (says Dr. Stewart,) "all the desert to the south of Wady Feiran."

He adds, "The two things required to fix this locality are a mountain sufficiently lofty and isolated

Digitized by Google

to be seen from the region lying round its base; and secondly, a valley or valleys among the mountains large enough to contain the tents of Israel, and visible through all their extent from the mountain top. Serbal alone is such a mountain; and Wady Aleyat and Wady Rimm run up to its very base." Wady Aleyat being four miles in length, and Serbal towering 2000 feet above it, with no projecting spurs to hide his summits, is preeminently "the mount that might be touched," as St. Paul calls it (Heb. xii. 18), and that required "bounds to be set all roundabout": for the Lord said,—

"Whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death. There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live" (Ex. xix. 13).

The people "stood therefore at the nether part of the mount" (ver. 17), and it is not now the "bush," but the mountain itself that burns with the presence of the Lord. "The Lord descended upon it in fire" (ver. 18), with thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount; and the voice of a trumpet sounding long, and waxing louder and louder . . . and the smoke of Mount Sinai ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly, as the chaos of ruins in Wady Aleyat still testify.

Dr. Stewart declares that words are too feeble to portray a thunderstorm which he experienced in that region; the "thunderbolts whose echoes were bandied from craig to craig as they rushed along the Wady, while they swept like a whirlwind among the mighty peaks above, and burst again with undiminished violence through some yawning cleft till the ground trembled with the concussion. It seemed as if all the mountains of the peninsula

Digitized by Google

were answering one another. Ever and anon a flash of lightning dispelled the pitchy darkness; then again, the crashing thunder-peals scattered their echoes to the four quarters of the heavens, and overpowered the loud howlings of the wind." This was the very scene of the "blackness and darkness and tempest," which was so terrible that it made Moses say, "I exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb. xii. 21).

And now to the sound of the trumpet was added "the voice of words," of which Moses said,—

"Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and lived?" (Deut iv. 33.)

"The Lord talketh with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire.

"And I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire." (Deut. v. 4.)

The utterance of this word was by angels, according to St. Paul in Hebrews ii. 2, and in Acts vii. 53, Stephen tells his persecutors that their "fathers received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."

The law was ordained by angels, in the hand of a Mediator, and so awful was each myriad-spoken tone (Gal. iii. 19), that the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was (Ex. xx. 21).

The name of Moses is linked for ever with the giving of the Law. We hear in Scripture of the "law of Moses," though the children of Israel are never called the children of Moses, but the children of Abraham.

Moses is the man who was led into a closer communication with the invisible and spirit world, than was vouchsafed to any other man in the Old Testa-

Digitized by Google

ment dispensation. He was—what was he not? leader and prophet, priest and king, law-giver and poet.

There are three eras in his life of forty years:—

His first forty, in the land of Egypt.

The second forty, as a shepherd in Midian.

The third forty, as a leader of the people.

And the last forty years may again have three divisions:—

The six weeks' march from Egypt to Sinai, and the year at its base.

The thirty-eight years' wanderings from Sinai to Kadesh.

The last year of conquest of Eastern Palestine.

During all this last forty years, Moses was preserved in intimate communion with God. He knew God, not as any other prophet in a vision and a dream: "My servant Moses is not so," says the Lord (Numbers xii. 7), "with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold."

The Mussulman to this day calls him El Kelim Allah: "The spoken to by God."

This Divine speech or revelation happened, as we have seen, in four ways.—

1. In the burning bush.
2. In the thick dark thunder-cloud.
3. In the mount, on the two occasions of his forty days' fasting.
4. In the tabernacle between the Cherubim.

The book of Exodus may be divided into two parts: the historical and the legislative. The historical is comprised in the first eighteen chap-

Digitized by Google

ters. The law is given from the 19th to the 50th chapters.

The first nineteen chapters relate to—

The increase of the people.
The birth of Moses, and his education.
His Divine call and training in the desert.
The ten plagues of Egypt.
The Passover, and flight of the people.
The journey from Egypt to Sinai.
Records of Marah and Rephidim, of Amalek and Jethro, of the Manna and the Quails.

The second portion records—

The institution of the Theocracy, or government of God—over a kingdom of priests—a holy nation.
Jehovah reveals His presence on Mount Sinai, and then ordains for Himself a tabernacle, a presence-place, and an altar on earth beneath, and prescribes vestments and ordinances for His service.

He proclaims a nation of slaves, now redeemed and set apart, as representatives of the whole human race, for the service of God and as heirs of the covenant made with Abraham. This covenant contained the spiritual promise of the Messiah: who would come to redeem all nations from their sins—of which Israel lost sight, and forgot it in their national pride and vain glory.

Alas! the same book of Exodus shews ere its conclusion, that the first use to which both the people and Moses too put this law of God, was *to break it;* the people, by idolatry and licentiousness even while Moses was in the mount; and he, in indignation and haste, which it requires yet forty days more in the Divine presence, spent doubtless in utter seclusion and humiliation (but concerning

Digitized by Google

which we hear very little) entirely to mould him into the likeness of God's own forbearance with this stiff-necked people.

How solemn is the declaration of Ex. xxiv. 9, 10:—

That "then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel:

"And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. Also they saw God, and did eat and drink."

Now as our Lord Himself declares that "No man hath seen the Father at any time;" let us remember *who was* this Jehovah upon Sinai,—the Jehovah of the Jewish Church in the wilderness. The martyr Stephen tells us, just before his death, that *the angel* which spake to Moses in mount Sinai was none other than *the* angel of the burning bush—the angel of the Lord, who had said of Himself, "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," before whom Moses "trembled and durst not behold" (Acts vii. 32); and also none other than the Saviour, the afterwards crucified Redeemer of the world, whose voice (says Paul, Heb. xii. 26) "then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven."

Dear friends, when you have thought of Jesus taking upon Him the form of a servant, have you also thought of that Jesus as one and the same with the awful Jehovah of Sinai? At both times it is said of Him, "yet He loved the people" (Deut. xxxiii. 3), and "for His great love wherewith He loved us" (Eph. ii. 4).

It is good to go back in thought to Sinai, and to realize with deep reverence that the mighty God has actually spoken with men upon the earth.

Digitized by Google

When He had thus spoken, in majesty and fire, to the ear and eye of the favoured people, He did not intend the impression of that day to pass away: He had given them a Revelation,—a Law that was to separate them from all other people; and His words to them were to endure for ever.

From the time that they became, through Moses, the keepers of the oracles of God, *they were judged by them*, and they were expected to live by them; they became The People of the Book.

They had subscribed to the covenant; they had said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." They were "under the Law"; and whenever they broke their promise, they incurred punishment and suffering, and this they continually did.

They remained before Mount Sinai a few days longer than eleven months. During this time, Jehovah made them fully understand that He was their King, and He established the regular service of His royal court by the priests and Levites. He set apart more than a fiftieth portion of the whole nation to this office. They were to receive His Law from Moses, to copy it, and to read it to the people,—not only the Ten Commandments, as written by the finger of God upon the two tables of stone, but the Book of the Covenant also, which Moses had written (Exod. xxiv. 4), and read in the audience of the people for the first time, "by the altar under the hill."

During these eleven months, their form of government in all things was appointed, their institutions established, and the Tabernacle fashioned and set up "according to the pattern shown to Moses in the mount," for the house or palace of their Divine King, who always visibly dwelt among them in the glory that was between the cherubim.

Digitized by Google

The same period witnessed their breach of the first Commandment, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me," in the worship of the golden calf, —possibly a remembrance of the Eden Cherubim— and its punishment in the death of 3000 among the people.

But we are now passing into the age when the Pentateuch began to be written. Perhaps you will like to think of the material it was written upon, and the character in which Moses wrote it. This is a piece of ancient Hebrew—the language in which the law was written—

The Bible was written by degrees, and by different persons: it took 1600 years to write. The first five books, as we have said before, are generally believed to have been written by Moses in the wilderness, as well as the book of Job; viz.:—

Genesis, Numbers,
Exodus, Deuteronomy,
Leviticus,

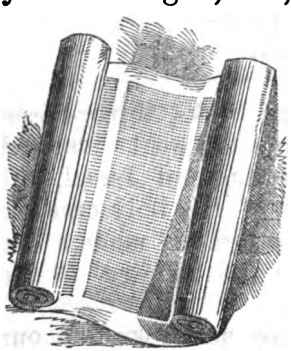
The rest of the Old Testament books, thirty-three in number, were written by different inspired leaders, prophets, priests, and kings, of Israel, but all by Israelites—the keepers of His holy oracles: and as they were written, God himself made a law that they should be read, by the Levites, to the people continually.

But at that time there were no books like our books. The time of Moses was 1550 years before Christ our Saviour came into the world. Our mode of printing or of making paper had not then been discovered. The old Egyptians made linen, in which they wrapped their mummies, and so prepared it, that they could trace hieroglyphics upon it. They also wrote upon rolls made of their rush-papyrus, that is, of the coats which surround its

Digitized by Google

stalk. The largest papyrus roll now known is ten yards long: many of these are found in the tombs of Egypt, though not often of so great a length. A very valuable one has been taken from these tombs to the museum at Turin, containing the names of King Mykerinus, the builder of the third pyramid, and Reksharé, the architect of Thebes; but the Pentateuch of Moses is not supposed to have been written on this rush-paper.

It is thought that he must have used goat-skins, prepared and fastened together: the very oldest manuscripts of his five books known, are written on leather. There is one in the public library, at Cambridge, which was discovered by Dr. Buchanan, in the record-chest of a synagogue of the Black Jews, in Malabar, in 1806: it measures sixteen yards in length; and, though not perfect, consists of thirty-seven skins, dyed red. There is another in the library of the British Museum, which we have seen. That is a large double roll of this description. It is written with great care, on forty thick brown skins, in 153 narrow columns: the writing is, of course, in Hebrew. It was, most probably in this form that the world received the first part of the Word of God, —His *written voice* from heaven.



We cannot suppose that the *very* roll that Moses wrote is come down to us—that would be impossible. That very roll is supposed to have perished at the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 586; if so, it was treasured and in existence for

Digitized by Google

eight centuries and a half—more than 800 years. Moses commanded the Levites to put it in the side of the ark of the covenant, "for a witness against the people."

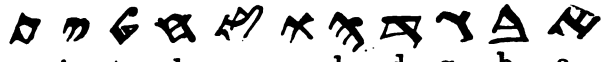
The final covenant made with Israel in the plains of Moab, with the last lofty song and eloquent prophecy, seems to have been written on a separate skin; and Dr. Adam Clarke thinks there is every reason to believe that this was the portion lost and found in the reign of Josiah, 800 years after it was written. This was called an *autograph copy*, which means *the very one that Moses wrote.* It had been lost in the reigns of the wicked kings that went before Josiah, who was a reforming king; and when he set himself to repair the House of the Lord his God, and brought hewn-stone and timber to repair the floors which the kings of Judah had destroyed, Hilkiah, the priest, found a book of the Law of the Lord *by the hand of Moses*, and gave it to the king (2 Chron. xxxiv. 14). You perceive that the frontispiece of this tract exhibits a very beautiful roll, and that underneath it is inscribed—"The Samaritan Pentateuch."

If you look back to the frontispiece of Tract III. you will find the city of Nablus, the "Schechem of the Bible, where the very few people in the world still called Samaritans (about 150 in number), continue to live. This roll is in the possession of their priests, and is thought to be the oldest written copy of the Pentateuch now in existence.

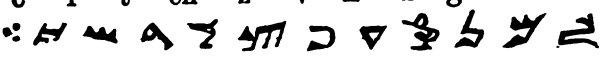
Our Prince of Wales went to see it in the year 1862, and a fine photograph of it was made for his Royal Highness. By his gracious permission, and the kindness of Mr. Bedford, the photographer, we are permitted to present to our readers a woodcut of it in its silver case, and with its cover of crimson satin embroidered with letters of gold.

Digitized by Google

THE WRITTEN SAMARITAN ALPHABET.



o i t ch z v h d g b a



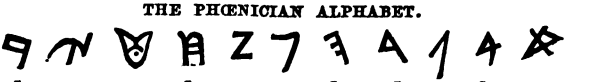
th t sh r k ts p o s n m e

These are the ancient letters in which it is written. We received the antique alphabet from the Rev. J. Mills, who obtained it at Nablus, and has kindly allowed us the use of it. It differs from that found on coins.

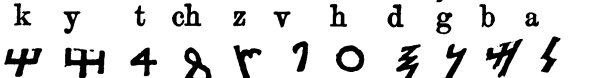
The Samaritans say that their Roll is the identical one written by Abishua, the great-grandson of Aaron, fourth high priest; and others, who do not quite credit this, yet suppose it to have been written hundreds of years before the coming of our Lord. The precious relic is worn and torn with the kisses of many pilgrims, and is patched with re-written parchment. Mr. Mills considers that about two-thirds of the original writing remains.

This gentleman has twice resided among the Samaritans at Nablus, to collect all trustworthy information concerning them. He believes their old written alphabet to have been given by Moses, and that it was either drawn from characters already existing among the Phœnicians or Canaanites, or else especially given him of God.

THE PHŒNICIAN ALPHABET.



k y t ch z v h d g b a



t sh r k tz p e s n m l

This alphabet of the Canaanites is very old. Some of its letters are remarked by Sir Henry Rawlinson

Digitized by Google

on the sides of clay tablets full of Assyrian characters (like that on p. 28), and also on copper weights in the shape of lions, which were found in the Nineveh palaces. Sir Henry says that in these Phœnician characters he reads the names of Tiglath Pileser, Shalmaneser, Sargon, and Sennacherib, which are the Scripture names of Assyrian kings, in whose reigns those weights were current. But having mentioned the characters in which it was written, we must tell you a little more about the Roll of the Samaritan Pentateuch.

The translation of the books of Moses in our English Bibles is not taken from that Roll alone, though it is so very old, but from manuscripts which have been copied and re-copied and preserved by the JEWS in the square Hebrew character, such as Ezra used after the captivity in Babylon. In their fearful persecutions and wanderings the Jews have lost the original Rolls of Hebrew, and yet from the internal evidence of Scripture the authority of the Hebrew version of the Bible has been generally considered the greatest.

Our translators have taken the utmost pains to compare with each other the three most ancient versions of Scripture—the Samaritan, the Hebrew, and the "Septuagint," which was a Greek version, made at Alexandria, B.C. 277, by a council of seventy learned men, for the use of the Jews in Egypt, who were accustomed to speak Greek.

Alexandria was then a chief colony of the Jews, and one of the greatest cities in the world; it is said that a hundred thousand of them resided there.

Learned men consider this translation, called the Septuagint, very valuable. The evangelists and the apostles quoted from it as much as from the Hebrew, but they never quoted from the Apocryphal books

Digitized by Google

which were attached to this Greek version, and which may still be found in some few old English Bibles, bound up between the Old and New Testaments. They were *not*, as we have said, *inspired books*. Some were written by learned Jews at Alexandria, after the prophetic spirit had ceased with Malachi. Not even their writers say they are inspired: they were written in Greek and not in Hebrew, the ancient sacred language. They were never received as sacred by the ancient Jewish Church. A child may perceive the difference between them and the Holy Scriptures.

The three versions are, in most of their main points, alike, and the Samaritan copy as well as the Hebrew, may have followed the very autograph of Moses. It has been remarked by students of the two, that "if the Samaritan shall be found in some places to correct the Hebrew, yet will the Hebrew copy in other places correct the Samaritan. Each copy is invaluable. Both have been often transcribed, both therefore may contain errors; they differ in many instances, therefore the errors must be many. Let the genuine words of Moses be ascertained by their joint assistance."

In the opposite vignette you have embodied the subject of this Tract. Here are the tables of the Ten Commandments on stone, first graven by the finger of God; and the papyrus rush behind them, hints at the material for writing upon which was used at that time in Egypt. You have also the miniature of the SAMARITAN roll, with a HEBREW roll to the left, and the GREEK Septuagint to the right; while on the rock behind them, are hints of the rough inscriptions and drawings on the Sinaitic mountains. The heavenly dove hovers over the holy books, distinguished from all others in their

Digitized by Google



TABLES OF STONE—WITH HEBREW AND SAMARITAN ROLLS OF THE PENTATEUCH—THE GREEK SEPTUAGINT—AND ALEXANDRINE VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

celestial origin. They are the first written forms of the message from God to man—the Revelation which lifts the veil from the unseen world on high.

The most important point of variation, as is well known, between these three versions, is in the Chronology, or time-table, in which some of the copyists seem to have used their own discretion, for copyists were not inspired.

	From Adam to the Deluge.	Between the Deluge and the birth of Christ.		From the Creation of man to the present Era.
The Hebrew gives	1656	2348	+ 1868 =	5872
The Samaritan gives	1307	3131	+ 1868 =	6306
The Septuagint gives	2262	3099	+ 1868 =	7229

You will observe that in these Tracts we always adhere to the first, or Hebrew view, that the seventh thousand year of the world's history is yet

Digitized by Google

to come—its Sabbath in the *week of time.* The Hebrew is called the "Old fashioned" Chronology; and it is still always appended to our authorized English Bible.

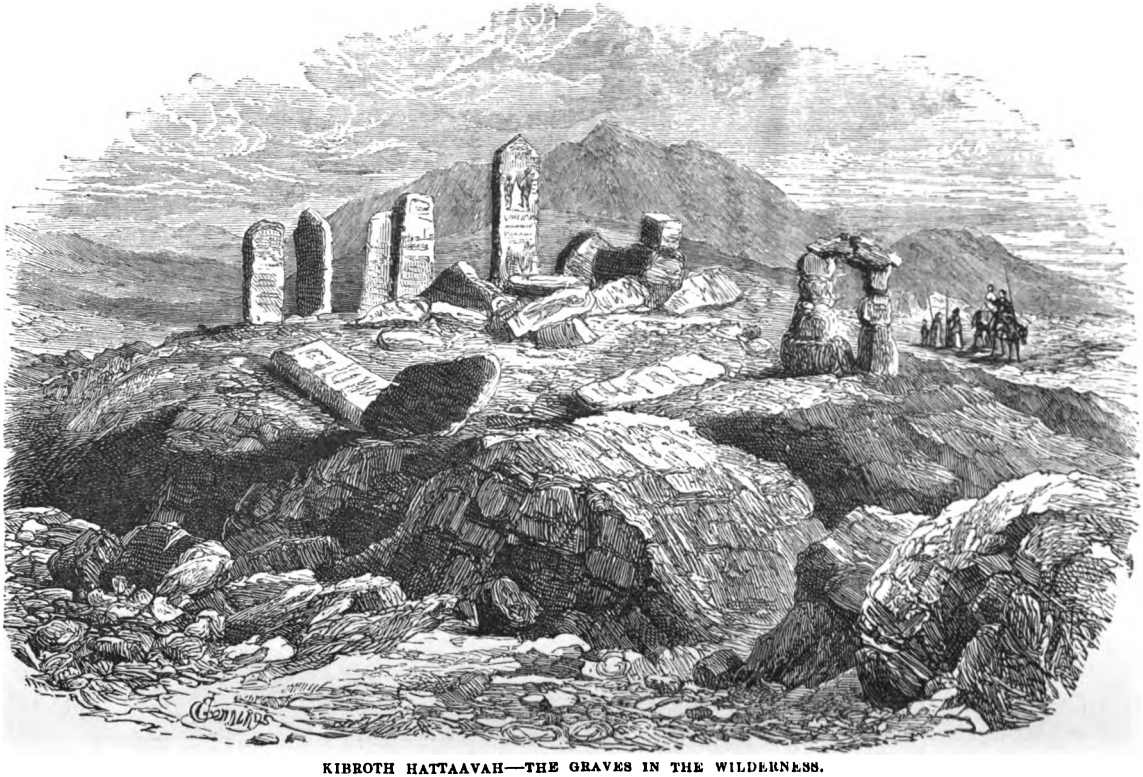
The very name Samaritan was with the Jew a term of extreme reproach; they said to our Lord Himself, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil" (John viii. 48.) *But the Samaritans expected the Messiah* (John iv. 25), and when He came many of them believed on Him.

The Jews "had no dealings with the Samaritans," but the Saviour had. He abode among this people for two days, after conversing with the woman of Samaria as He sat on the well at this same Sychar, and "many believed because of His own word." Did He point them to this copy of their venerated law, and determine that it should endure among them till the hour of His coming again, as a witness to Him? And where? In the place of its earliest utterance in the Land of Promise.

We are thrice told in the Acts of the Apostles that there were churches of God in Samaria (Acts viii. 1, ix. 31; xv. 3.) The apostle Philip was a preacher of the Gospel there, "working miracles," and the people with one accord gave heed to him and were baptized, both men and women (Acts viii. 6.) *By Peter and John they received afterwards the gift of the Holy Ghost* (ver 17). These Apostles preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans, following the example of their Master, who "must needs go through Samaria," and forgot not His ancient ISRAEL.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



KIBROTH HATTAAVAH—THE GRAVES IN THE WILDERNESS.

Digitized by Google

THE TIMES WHEN THE PENTATEUCH WAS BEING WRITTEN.

THE GRAVES IN THE WILDERNESS.

No. IX.

The Books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, all concern the LAW and the pilgrimage of Israel in the desert, and it is an interesting question to ask, How much may it be supposed that the people at that time knew of the Divine Revelation?

Amid his other duties ordained by God, Aaron had, doubtless, not neglected that of copying the Law, and reading it to the people. This was especially ordered to be done for eight days together, once in every seven years; but we know that during the training of Israel in the wilderness, this was not all they heard or knew of the Law; for Moses says to them (Deut. xxx. 11—14),—

"The commandment which is written in this book of the law is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

"It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

"Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

"But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

"In thy mouth" seems to signify, that they learned portions of it. Moses ordered the Levites

Digitized by Google

to write his last noble song, and to teach it to the children of Israel,—"*Put it in their mouths*, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel, that when many evils and troubles are befallen them, this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed" (Deut. xxxi. 19, 21). If an Israelite was in doubt as to any ordinance or duty, he was to inquire of the priest, the Levite, who was also the judge, and would show him the sentence of judgment (Deut. xvii. 9), as written by Moses. Any one of the people who was able, might write a copy of the Law for himself; but the Levites were in general the learned class among this pastoral people, and were not only to make, but to give away, correct copies of it; and probably they went about from tent to tent (as Scripture-readers and Bible-women do now from house to house), to read the Law to each family. It is always assumed that the people "knew it"; and in the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses threw its precepts into a new form, for the generation which had been born since the entrance into the wilderness.

But we have not yet completed our survey of Exodus, all whose forty chapters, *except the first twelve*, and the ten first chapters of the Book of Numbers in addition, concern *Israel's first year in the wilderness*. The book of Leviticus, as its name implies, is altogether a book of *Laws*. The *second ten chapters* of Numbers tell the whole story of the pilgrimage for the next thirty-eight years, till Aaron dies, and is buried on Mount Hor; and then Moses carries on the people for one more year to the conquest of Eastern Palestine before he too ascends the Mount Pisgah to die: and the main idea of this tract

Digitized by Google

must be to lead you to think of the period of the thirty-eight years, and to trace the *graves in the wilderness*, for all the generation who came out of Egypt died there, except Caleb and Joshua, (Numbers xxvi. 63—65), though a new generation of twenty years old and upwards had risen up to be numbered by Moses and Eleazar, from all the families of the patriarchs, in their stead.

The history of the wilderness is both actual and symbolical; and it is in many respects a foreshowing of the history of the whole of God's large family, who, with rare and final exceptions, are to pay the penalty of sin by death, ere they can reach the heavenly Canaan. But ere we look upon the sins of Israel and their punishment, let us first examine what Jehovah the Lord God of heaven and earth was willing to have been to the nation whom He calls His first-born. He had said to Pharaoh—

"Let my first-born go, that he may serve me."

The Ten Commandments were the revealed standard of morals required in the Mosaic dispensation to which the Sermon on the Mount is the parallel from the lips of our Lord when in the flesh.

The Divine PRESENCE had been manifest on the Mount Sinai in thunder and in fire, in a way to efface all the faint and false heathen memories of that Presence which had once been manifested at the gate of Eden. That real and visible Presence was to dwell with this favored people in a pillar of fire and cloud, and to dwell perpetually, during their sojourn in the wilderness.

The children of Israel were introduced to this Presence immediately after their first passover, and for forty years they were perfectly familiar with it. "He spread a cloud for a covering" (Ps. cv. 39)

Digitized by Google

over that vast host of pilgrims, "and fire to give light in the night;"—a cloud that could be "darkness" to the whole camp of the Egyptians, while to Israel it "gave light." And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle (Num. xii. 5). The cloudy pillar descended,—and the Lord talked with Moses at the door of the tabernacle (Exod. xxxiii. 9).

The Lord "took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."—Exodus xiii. 22.

But "when the cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle," then,—

"Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle."—(Exodus xl. 35.)

The pattern of this Tabernacle in its minutest detail had been shewn to Moses in the Mount (Exod. xxvi. 30). The Lord had prepared for Himself in the wilderness, a place of Presence "between the cherubim over the mercy-seat."

The Divine autograph, the second set of the tables of the Law (Deut. x. 5), were the treasure preserved in the ark, whose lid of pure gold was beaten out at either end into the form of the cherubim; but what that form was we have no hint, except that it was "winged." The Mercy-seat was the blood-besprinkled lid that covered the law tables, foreshadowing Him who was "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' The cherubim symbolized human nature in perfect oneness with Jesus, for they were elevated on the platform of the sprinkled mercy-seat, one with Jesus in His death, and therefore one with Him in His glory.

And it is from above the Mercy-seat, and between

Digitized by Google

the two cherubim, that the Lord declares to Moses—

"There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee."—(Exodus xxv. 22.)

The Almighty is said, figuratively, to *dwell* between the cherubim, to *ride* upon them, to *sit* between them. Ezekiel, in vision long after (chaps. x., xi.), saw His glory depart from off the threshold of the temple in Jerusalem, and stand over the cherubim, and the cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth in the prophet's sight, at the close of Israel's "trial era," to return no more visibly to that nation till the holy Babe of Nazareth lay in the arms of the aged Simeon in the temple of Herod, and the man of God knew *Him* to be the "Light" that would lighten the Gentiles, and "the glory" of His people Israel.

When He, the beloved Son of God, gave up the ghost upon the accursed tree, the vail of the temple with its "cunning work" of cherubim, was rent in twain. The visible Presence had no more symbol upon earth, and henceforward abode only in the hearts of His spiritual Israel—the Light to lighten the Gentiles. His people Israel, according to the flesh, have since "abode many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image (margin, 'a standing' before the Lord), and without an ephod, and without teraphim" (Hosea iii. 4); without all the *signs* of the Presence to which they had been accustomed; their King and their Sacrifice they had blindly rejected, and the symbols that had surrounded and prefigured Him have ever since vanished away.

Josephus declares that no man knew the form of the cherubim in his day, "their form is not like to that of any of the creatures which men have seen,

Digitized by Google

though Moses said he had seen such beings near the throne of God" (Antiq. iii. 6); but if the later Jews had lost the knowledge of the form of these mystic symbols, the allusions to them remain in God's Word, and they must always be invested with an awful interest and importance in the eye of the student of the Bible.

At the commencement of their wilderness journey, God manifested His design to claim the people for His own: and all His laws for them are framed as by their king. He meant to be the Visible and Eternal Head of this nation whom He had ransomed from Egypt, and would now ransom from Satan, and from their own sinful selves.

The heathen nations had learned evil from the Prince of Evil, whom they served and consulted, in certain ways which were an "abomination to the Lord," these practices He forbade Israel to follow.

"There shall not be found among you any one that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. The Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do." (Deut. xviii. 10—14.)

We find in Leviticus xx. 27, that transgressors in this respect were to be stoned to death.

The life of this people was to be ruled by communion with a Holy Spirit from above, and not from beneath.

They were to be redeemed from Satan's power, and a law was ordained for them which stood between their better and their worse selves, as it did between Israel and heathendom; it was a gift of guidance to strengthen motions towards good in the weak, and to check the evil of the heart.

In the patriarchal childhood of the nation they had been governed as a family by *fatherhood*, and

Digitized by Google

by few and simple rules; but now in their headstrong youth they needed "commandments" that should vigorously check impulsive action. "The law was added because of transgressions," and during the first fifty days in which God led them away alone to the wilderness, they had several lessons in putting away childish things, and entering upon nobleness of life, in communion with the unseen and invisible God.

They had hitherto received only fragments of God's revelations and laws, and by those they had abode all the while they remained in Egypt, where the people had a religion of far more show. Now *a system of laws* was given to Israel by degrees, and of laws divided under different heads—ceremonial, moral, civil, and political. Side by side with the law of the father, came the law of the priest, presiding over sacerdotal affairs. This law was gradually revealed. In Exodus we have only its marked outline. Details afterwards grew up out of the requirements of the time and special circumstances. The unconnected nature of the laws in the earlier books of Moses makes this evident. Anything like a perfect system of law is only found in Deuteronomy, when the younger generation were prepared to receive it; and yet this system was not *final*, it required much after illustration by teachers and by prophets, whose office it was to explain the law.

God desired to *shew* Himself to this favored nation as their Head. He was going to place them in Canaan, and to teach them, ere they entered it, that all the land was HIS, the first fruits of it were to be offered to HIM (Exod. xxiii. 19) all the fruits it brought forth in each seventh year were to belong to *His* poor. It was to "rest and be still," for their sake. All the people were HIS, all their firstborn

Digitized by Google

belonged to HIM, and were to be ransomed by their own parents.

The power of God was absolutely unlimited, and supreme over governors and governed—none could be cruel and despotic under HIM; Jehovah was the KING, above the prophet and above the priest, whom He raised up to study and explain His laws, for LAW regulated the whole life of an Israelite, as the Gospel now ought to regulate the whole life of a Christian, his house and home, his dress, his food, his property. By these laws the duties of worship were in all things defined, and selfishness in every way openly checked, and the necessity of an atonement for *every sin* on the part of the sinner was perpetually kept before the eyes of Israel.

The *Moral* Law, or law of conduct towards God and man, was followed by the *judicial* law, or law of judgments, and the *ceremonial* law, or law of festivals and sacrifices,—which latter required to be so many and continual, that the Apostle Peter says of them in Acts xv. 10, "they were a yoke which the fathers were not able to bear."

This, however, only pointed to THE COMING ONE, who, and who only, would in course of time be able to fulfil the Law; who, and who only, would also bear the curse consequent on its nonfulfilment for all mankind who should believe on Him; and doubtless many a thoughtful Israelite beheld HIM under the shadow of the "Paschal Lamb," of the "Manna," of the "Smitten rock," of the "Mercy-seat," of the "High Priest," of the "Rod that budded," of the "Brazen Serpent," of the "Scape-goat," and of all the various offerings.

It was the intent of God *to set apart to Himself* the "peculiar people" to whom these Divine revelations were made.

Digitized by Google

And alas! having shewn what it was the purpose of Jehovah that Israel *should* be, we must hasten to observe what they really were, the "manners of the people that died in the wilderness," are all summed up in one word—"in the days of the *provocation*," or provoking of God by His sinful creatures (Psalm xcv. 8).

You must look for the history of the thirty-eight years, as we have said, from the 10th to the 20th chapters of the Book of Numbers, and for the repetition of it in the first and second chapters of Deuteronomy: also for the summary of the names of the places at which the cloudy pillar which went before them rested, in the 33rd chapter of Numbers. Those writers have done great service, who have diligently explored and marked any points of interest in these thirty-eight years of which so little is recorded.

"On the twentieth day of the second month, of the second year (after they came out of Egypt) the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony."—(Numbers x. 11.)

"And it rested next in the wilderness of Paran," or Feiran, (ver. 12,) and they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey, (ver. 33); and the next we hear of them is that they complained, and that it displeased the Lord, and the fire of the Lord burnt among them. Thus they had His "fire" in exchange for His "shadow," and it consumed in the uttermost parts of the camp till quenched at the prayer of Moses; and he called the name of the place Taberah.

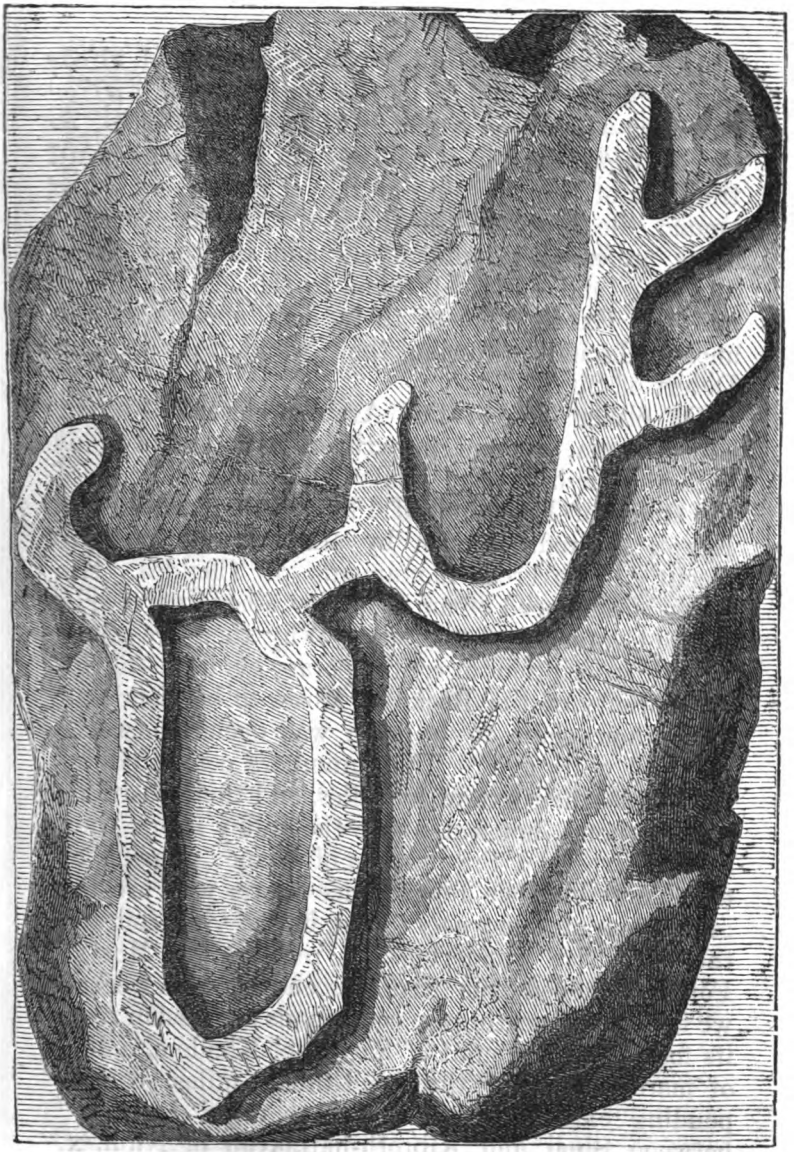
The Hebrew root בער literally signifies burning, but figuratively anger or wrath. The sense of the Arabic word *berah*, is the wrath of God. The Arabic name of the Wady Berah is therefore the record of this fact—the valley of the wrath of God. In this very valley Dr. Stewart of Leghorn, (before

Digitized by Google

quoted) found a number of blackened cairns of stone which had evidently remained undisturbed for ages. In two of them a huge stone had fallen in from the top, revealing two narrow chambers formed of granite blocks. "Travelling up the Wady Berah," he says, "we found more tombs with several chambers in each; the whole of one part of the wide valley seems to have been covered with graves, of which the stones are scattered about in all directions. There is no vestige of a town or village. The place is too distant from Feiran, for the graves to have had any connection with the ancient city there." This writer therefore believes that they are the graves of the Israelites, the graves of the murmurers at Taberah.

Dr. Stewart says nothing about the Sinaitic inscriptions in this valley, but Dr. Robinson supplies this missing link of evidence. When he passed through Wady Berah, the burial-grounds escaped his notice, but he observed and noticed the ancient writings: "I crossed this valley," says he, "and on a large rock found four inscriptions. Just by our tent was a huge detached rock covered with them; indeed, we found these writings at almost every point where the overhanging or projecting rock seemed to indicate a convenient resting-place." The occurrence of the Sinaitic inscriptions in connection with the graves in Wady Berah is a new point in the evidence, since, if it be admitted that the tombs are those of the Israelites, the Israelite authorship of the adjoining inscriptions would be rendered still more probable; and it is very remarkable that these inscriptions,—whether as read by Professor Beer's alphabet, or by Mr. Forster's, (see p. 137) would, in either case, serve *as epitaphs*. The ordinary and actual size of these mysterious letters is figured on the opposite page, as given by Laborde.

Digitized by Google



Two Sinaitic Characters, signifying, according to Mr. Forster's alphabet, "THE PEOPLE"—according to Professor Beer's, "PEACE." They stand at the commencement of a large number of the inscriptions.

Digitized by Google

If their origin be all "Nabathean," and their general date the middle of the fourth century *after* our Lord—how was it that in the age of Cosmas, *so shortly after that* in A.D. 518, all knowledge and tradition of the meaning of the characters was *lost* among the Arabs of the district, but that certain Jews professed to understand and interpret their meaning, and assigned them to the age of Moses and the Exode, and to their own ancestors, the ancient Israelites, during their wanderings in the Desert of Sin?

On either side of this Arabian desert, EGYPT, and ASSYRIA, abound in written monuments of as high and far higher antiquity. The hoar old age of the stones of Ipsambul, of Philœ, and of Thebes in Egypt, is credited even by atheists, and in some recently recovered monuments of Chaldea, the claim is advanced of an antiquity ascending nearly to the Confusion of tongues. Why then are these Sinaitic inscriptions or contemporary evidences of the authenticity of the Books of Moses to be dismissed when their claim to be such was declared twelve hundred years ago? Their numbers computed by thousands, their extent by miles, and their positions often fathoms, not feet, above the valley floors, they *cannot* have been the pastime of chance pilgrims or travellers; and, we repeat once more, why are the great mass of them *only* found in the very route of the Israelitish wanderings, as recorded by Moses? For it is indeed true that descending from Serbal, we trace these writings in continuous succession from its foot to the summit of Sarbut-el-Khadem, a line of march of about three-and-thirty miles, corresponding exactly with the "three days' journey" between Sinai and Kibroth-hattaavah of Num. x. 33; and from these points there is both an upper

Digitized by Google

and a lower route. Mr. Forster thinks that *both* were traversed by the Israelites after the camp broke up from Sinai, the former apparently by Moses and the host. The latter probably by the "mixed multitude" and other followers of the camp. They would meet in the plain of Ramleh, the only one in the neighbourhood of sufficient extent to have contained the people with their tents and baggage, and "very much cattle."

"The summit," we have said, "of Sarbut-el-Khadem," for our frontispiece will shew you—that it is a mountain height, and a mountain cemetery—a place of graves; and graves are also scattered in the surrounding valleys. This mountain and its monuments were known to geographers two or three hundred years ago, as an Israelite station. Niebuhr rediscovered it in 1762. Laval, a French artist who has modelled the inscriptions, speaks of the ascent as very toilsome up the precipitous red sandstone rock. "A narrow track winds along the face of the precipice at the head of the ravine, where a false step would have been death; and at the top we came upon a level ridge, and a tract of high table-land resembling the Saxon Switzerland, and intersected by deep ravines, while higher peaks lay all around it. Here with a dark chasm on either side are situated the singular and mysterious monuments of Sarbut-el-Khadem."

This mountain had been spoken of to M. Niebuhr as Jebel-el-Mokatteb. On ascending it, he says, he was astonished to find on the summit a superb *Egyptian* cemetery. "I give this description of it," he adds, "*though I had seen nothing in Egypt like it;* the space is filled with stones from five to seven feet high, covered with hieroglyphs; and the more one examines these stones, the more one is convinced

Digitized by Google

that they are tombstones, inscribed with epitaphs. In the midst of the stones has been erected a building of which only the walls remain, and a little chamber at the end sustained by square pillars, and these are also covered with inscriptions."

In a second visit, Niebuhr succeeded in copying these so-called "hieroglyphical" inscriptions which, he remarks, are as fine as any of the remains in Egypt. One feature particularly attaching to them however is, that the *goat*, an animal native to the desert, abounds in these, while in Egypt we notice *always the bull, and never the goat.*

Mr. Forster has copied and offered readings of Niebuhr's plates of the tablets of Sarbut-el-Khadem, and on first seeing them any cursory observer would say, "Oh, these are Egyptian hieroglyphics;" but on a more patient examination, this interpreter points us to unmistakable figures of long-legged geese, or "*nuhams*," as the prominent symbols; *twenty-five* of these birds occur in the first tablet, *ten* in the second, and *fifteen* in the third. The way of their capture is likewise indicated by a succession of archers, the same as on Egyptian monuments; there are no fewer than eighteen on the first tombstone. The Israelites of the Exode were a nation of archers.

"The children of Ephraim being armed and carrying bows." (Ps. lxxviii. 9.)

The birds which darkened the air would fall by tens of thousands before the arrows of 600,000 armed men; and besides the archers there occur figures running with sticks, which may depict the pursuit of the "featured fowls." Owls are also prominent, "ill-omened, and emblems of death." Among all these figures are commingled Sinaitic

Digitized by Google

characters. Mr. Forster thus deciphers by his alphabet some of the mixed legends and devices.

"From the sea the cranes congregate to one spot;
The archers shoot at the cranes passing over the plain.
Evil-stomached they rush after the prey—
The sepulchre their doom—their marrow corrupted by God.
The sleepy owl, emblem of death, God's sends destruction among them.

* * * * * *

"The mother of sepulchres—the black and white geese,
A sudden death. Greedily lusting after flesh, die the gluttons.
The mountain top ascend the Hebrews,
They eat, devour, consume, till nothing is left, exceeding all bounds.
Their bodies corrupted, by gluttony they die."

Now let us look back to the 11th chapter of Numbers.

Drunkenness and gluttony were vices against which the Israelites of the Exode had been warned by Moses; see the law made against these sins (Deut. xxi. 18—21), and that no less a punishment than death was decreed be inflicted on their account.*

"And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague. And He called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people that lusted."—(Num. xi. 33, 34.)

And for what had they lusted? they despised the manna, and desired flesh to eat, therefore the Lord in His anger brought "quails" from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were, two cubits high upon the face of the earth; with which description has been connected the extraordinary

* It would be interesting to search through the Books of Moses against *how many sins* the punishment of death was decreed by God.

Digitized by Google

idea of *small birds lying two cubits* high upon the face of the earth. Both Mr. Forster and Dean Stanley have done something to prove that the reading of the Hebrew word used by Moses, "*Salu*," ought not to be "*quails*," but "*cranes*," a kind of long-legged, red goose, two cubits in stature.

At the commencement of four short Sinaitic inscriptions in the Wady Mokatteb, or Written Valley, Mr. Forster found the old Arabic word *nuham*, which in his dictionary was translated "red geese," and as *the sea* was signified by the next word, the reading of the whole was, he believed—

"The red geese ascend from the sea
Lusting, the people eat on at them,"

Or,

"Lusting the people feed to repletion."

He then began to think that probably the Hebrew word *salu* might not mean *quails*, but *cranes*. Such birds sometimes resort to the coasts of Picardy, in France, in prodigious flocks. In 1740 they destroyed all the corn near the sea coast. They were knocked on the head with clubs, but their numbers were so vast that this availed but little; *when the north wind, which had brought them, ceased to blow, they took their leave.*

Mr. Forster announced this discovery concerning the cranes from the sea in his "Voice of Sinai," *twelve years ago*, and he was much surprised and pleased to read the following fact in an *unpublished* journal of Dean Stanley's :—

"On the evening and morning of our encampment, immediately before reaching the Wady Huderah, the sky was literally darkened by the flight of innumerable birds, which proved to be some large red-legged cranes *three feet high*, with

Digitized by Google

black and white wings, measuring seven feet from tip to tip, which we had seen in like numbers at the first cataract of the Nile." He adds that Schubert saw similar flights on nearly the same spot, which must be close to Kibroth-hattaavah, and that he and his friends had eaten one of these birds upon the Nile, and had found it *very good food.* When seen at Huderah, they were on the wing from the gulf of Akaba, across the Sinai peninsula; were flying over the very scene of the Scripture miracle. These *large* birds, then, it seems, were spread abroad round about the camp to dry their flesh in the burning sands, for this was a common Egyptian custom.

It is very obvious that the costly and elaborate monuments of the cemetery of Sarbut-el-Khadem, could not have been executed in the first month of Israel's stay there. A part of the thirty-eight years must have been spent in a *return* to that vicinity, and the tombstones of that mountain-top are no work of shepherds. How they can ever have been attributed to Egyptian miners, of whom nothing is heard elsewhere, one is at a loss to conceive. It seems that no visitors have hitherto succeeded in finding the mines; yet to the east and west of the small temple dedicated to Athor, on the summit, may be seen great mounds of slag; and there is a tongue of land that forms a terrace, and projects out into the valley, coated over with slag four or five feet thick, and covered to its base with slag also. This open spot appears to have been chosen for the smelting of ore, on account of the keen draughts of wind perpetually blowing here.

But if mining were ever carried on here *by Egyptians*, by way of Tor and the Red Sea; *still the*

Digitized by Google

Kibroth-hattaavah, in the second year of their wanderings! That last king of the Nineteenth dynasty was the one not buried in his own tomb, and would here, by another incidental proof, be identified as the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

It seems to have been by degrees that God refined and purified their language, as well as their ideas.

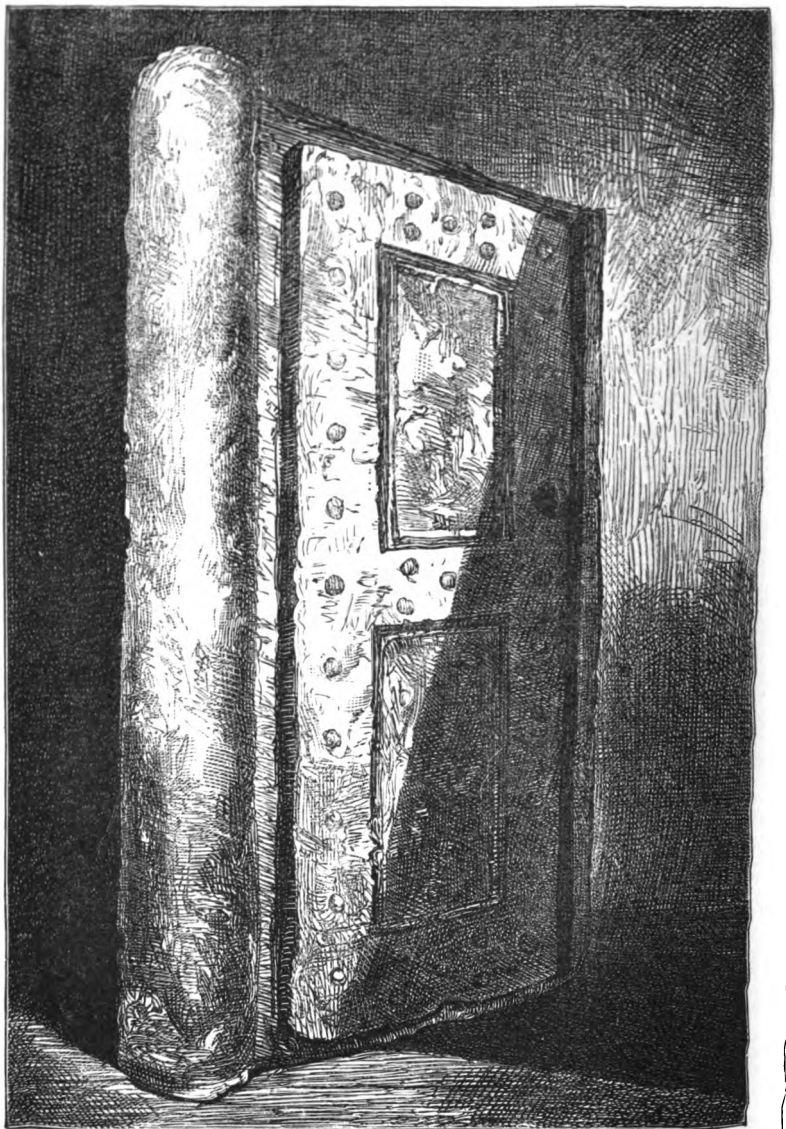
Besides the tables of the Law, two memorials were ordered to be kept of the miracles of the Exode, and laid up in the ark—Aaron's rod that budded, and an omer of the manna—the bread of the wilderness. St. Paul refers to them in the Hebrews.

"The ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." (Heb. ix. 3, 4.)

Between the laying up of the memorials of the *manna* and the *rod* may have occurred an interval of twenty years, the manna being laid up in B.C. 1491, the rod probably about B.C. 1471; but if any would, from the distinction of the priestly rod being laid up in the ark, deduce example for the undue assumption of authority on the part of the ecclesiastical orders—one deadly error of these present days—the great apostle of the Gentiles specifies that it was "the time *past* in which these things were ordained," and points to the functions of the Levitical priesthood only as illustrative of the eternal priesthood of Christ, his beloved Master, who entered in once for all into heaven itself, and having offered *Himself* unto God, thereby put away the sin alike of Jew and Gentile, and then sat down "a priest after the order of Melchisedek" at "the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." (See also Heb. vii. 18, 19.)

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



A STONE-DOOR FROM THE GIANT CITIES OF BASHAN.

Digitized by Google

THE TIMES OF THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY.

THE CLOSING YEAR IN THE WILDERNESS.

No. X.

THERE is a place called KADESH, where the greatest rebellion took place against the authority of Moses and Aaron, soon after the doom of forty years of wandering had been pronounced. After the fatal stay of the people for a month at Kibroth-hattaavah, their way lay onward "through a great and terrible wilderness by the mountain of the Amorites to Kadesh-barnea." (Deut. i. 19.)

"There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea," (Deut. i. 2),

is the minute record of Moses; and he makes another,—

"And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea until we came even over the brook Zered (north of Kadesh) was thirty-and eight-years, until all the generations of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the Lord sware unto them."

You may look for Kadesh on the map, p. 125, which is concluded to be in the neighbourhood of Ain-el-Weibeh. The line on that map marks the route of the Israelites till they arrived at Kadesh the first time, at the beginning of the above thirty-eight years.

Kadesh was then a city, and its name meant Holy; it had been holy like Horeb from more ancient times; its old name was Enmishpat—spring of judgment. Chedorlaomer had ravaged there in Abraham's day (see Gen. xiv. 7,) and it is twice mentioned in connection with Abraham's sojourn

Digitized by Google

in this country southward of Palestine. (Gen. xvi. 14; xx. 1.) Its natural springs had probably made it famous of old.

At Ain-el-Weibeh Dr. Robinson mentions three small streams running out from a low rise of ground, two of which have a strong medicinal taste, but the third is pure and good, and flows out of a rock which seems to have crumbled away. It is here *he* places the site of Kadesh, but more recent writers think that it lay still a little north of the plain just described, where the Wady-Jerafah descends from a precipitous plateau to the Wady-Arabah; and just at the junction there is a fountain of living water, now called Ain-esh-Sheibah, at the foot of the lofty cliff El-mukrah, which exactly answers to the description of the rock before which Moses gathered the congregation when he smote it twice, and water came out abundantly; this would be within a short journey of mount Hor, where Aaron was to die, soon afterwards.

It is very much to be remarked how the punishments enforced in the wilderness life, came specially on the breach of some one or other of the Ten Commandments.

The worship of the golden calf was the transgression of the first commandment:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

And its punishment was the death of 3000 of the people.

It was also a breach of the second commandment; they had bowed down before a graven image, and forgotten that the Lord was a jealous God.

The second sin occurred also before the mount, (see Lev. x. 1), when Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's [illegible]dest sons, who had been admitted with the seventy [illegible]ers into the very presence of the God of Israel,

Digitized by Google

offered "strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded not; and there went out fire from the Lord and consumed them, and Aaron was forbidden to bewail them, for this was a sin against the ordained form of worship;" and from Lev. x. 9, it may be inferred that wine or strong drink had unfitted them for discernment between the holy and unholy, the clean and the unclean.

Thus, therefore, did their heavenly King impress upon Israel His *first* and *second* commandments.

His *third* was enforced also by the penalty of death, (see Lev. xxiv. 10, 16), on the son of an Israelitish woman by an Egyptian father, who blasphemed the NAME of the Lord, and cursed.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him."

The fourth commandment, concerning God's DAY, receives equal witness. See Num. xv. 32.

"And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.

"And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.

And if God thus defended His WORSHIP, His NAME, and His DAY, and the people thus learned their duty towards HIMSELF, the history also illustrates His verification of the commands of the *second* table of laws concerning fellow-men. If the *fifth* commandment is broken—

"The man who smites or curses his father and his mother, shall surely be put to death." (Exod. xxi. 15, 17.)

And he that even "setteth light by them is cursed." (Deut. xxvii. 16.)

For the sixth, see Lev. xxiv. 17:

"And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death."

Digitized by Google

For the seventh:

See all the instances of marked judgment upon sins of impurity and greediness, in the "graves of lust" at Kibroth-hattaavah, (Numb. xi. 34), in the fearful plague, when four-and-twenty thousand died at Baal-peor, (Numb. xxv. 9.)

For the eighth:

He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, he shall surely be put to death, (Exod. xxi. 16); theft of a minor description is to be followed by restoring double.

And now for bearing false witness:

See the punishment of Miriam, who was smitten with leprosy, and became white as snow, for bearing false witness against her brother Moses. It is said concerning this, that

"The Lord heard it."

That was a sin that included also the breach of the *tenth* commandment; for both Miriam and Aaron seem to have coveted authority that was not theirs, and claimed an equality with Moses which Jehovah it is said, "suddenly" denied, and the anger of the Lord was kindled till the meek and forgiving brother cried, saying,

"Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee."

Thus God shewed His anger against each of the sins that He had specially forbidden. But the sins of the wilderness were all sins against God's wonderful love and mercy and power, against the "first and great commandment" the Lord had given; they were the sins of murmuring and distrust. And, alas! how like are we to wandering Israel even to this day. How many a young life begins with secret repining at a lot it would not have chosen, as Israel did at the manna—with not forgiving God when He takes away our idols—with longing to re-

Digitized by Google

turn to the leeks and onions of Egypt—with doubt of His power to give us all that is good for us—with getting tired of His way for us—and attempts to carve out our own—and yet our heavenly Father does not give us up. He leads us about from station to station; He empties us from vessel to vessel; He restoreth our souls; He is better to us than our fears; He teaches us what to pray for, and gives us more than our desire; He humbles, and He comforts; He covers our iniquities, and bears all our sorrows. And even if He makes our grave in the wilderness, our souls arise with a risen Saviour to the heavenly Canaan—the promised land, from which none return like the unfaithful spies, to tell us it cannot be won.

These spies went up in the second year of the wandering to see the land of Palestine, and in consequence of their search discouraged the people. They brought back glorious grapes from it, but they said the men of the land were giants, and that they should not be able to go up against them, for they felt like grasshoppers in their sight.

"And the men that did bring up an evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord." (Num. xiv. 37.)

The Syrian vine is still famous for the size of its clusters. There was one of these vines in the grounds of the Duke of Portland, at Welbeck, near Worksop, from which a cluster of grapes was gathered, weighing nineteen pounds; and intelligent travellers aver, that those who have only seen the vines in France and Italy can have no just idea of the size to which the clusters attain in Syria.

The evil part of their report was not probably in itself incorrect, that they had seen people of great stature; for Moses verifies their statement in speaking of the "Anakim, great and tall," and of

Digitized by Google

other old gigantic tribes, with a reference to the sons of Anak; and in the prophecy of Amos it is said (Amos ii. 9), "yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and who was strong as the oaks." Goliath, whom David slew, was a son of Anak; his stature may be taken at about nine feet: but they forgot that He who had dried up the Red Sea before them, and had overcome the Egyptians with His mighty plagues,—if His pillar of cloud and fire had pointed them towards the high-walled cities of the tall Anakim,—would have given them victory in Palestine also; but, as Moses afterwards says to them (Deut. i. 32), "In this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God."

And now the thirty-eight years having passed away since the spies had given their evil report, and "all the generation of the old men of war being wasted out from among the host as the Lord sware unto them," Moses adds—

"Now rise up, said I, and get you over the brook Zered. And we went over the brook Zered." (Deut. ii. 13.)

In the second chapter of Deuteronomy Moses by no means denies that the race they were about to conquer had in old time been gigantic. Still he adds—

"Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle.

"This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee.

If you will now turn back to the map at p. 44, you will find the river Arnon to the east of the Dead Sea, and studying the second chapter of

Digitized by Google

Deuteronomy will shortly find Heshbon mentioned, and Sihon its king, who would not let Israel pass, and who is smitten with his sons and his people, and all his cities, till none remained; the cattle only and the spoil being reserved for a prey, "from Aroer by the brink of the river of Arnon, and from the city that is by the river, even unto Gilead." Our little map will shew you the position of all those places, and you will see that Moses is advancing upwards in his conquest of Palestine, east of the Jordan.

We told you in our third tract that the land of *Eastern* Palestine has only of late years been rediscovered by recent travellers, having long been hidden from the eyes of the western nations; all access to its rocky hiding places and old stone cities being forbidden by the Druses and the Arabs, the modern children of Moab and of Ishmael.

When our fathers and grandfathers therefore read in the book of Deuteronomy of the last conquests of Moses before his people crossed the Jordan, they had none of the evidence that *we* have, of the minute truth of the noble and stirring narrative.

"I feel so glad," says Mr. Porter (who has written a most beautiful book called "The Giant Cities of Bashan"), "that I have been able to visit, even for a brief period, a country so renowned in earliest history, and sacred as one of the first provinces bestowed by God upon His ancient people. I enjoyed the beauty of the scenery, the grandeur of the ruins, the patriarchal welcome of my hosts; but *above all, the overwhelming testimony afforded at every step to the accuracy of the Mosaic history.*

"I had often read of Bashan, I had observed the statement that a single province of Og's kingdom, Argob, contained *threescore great cities!* and I had examined my map and had found that the whole of

Digitized by Google

Bashan, in which Argob is situated, is not larger than one of our English counties, and now when I came to the spot itself I found the story was all true! I had a list of more than *one hundred ruined* cities and villages situated in these mountains, in my hand, and more than *thirty* of them I had myself visited or passed closely by."

The Scripture name "Argob" means "the stony." The Druses now call it "El Lejah," and it lies like an island in the midst of the green and fertile plains of Bashan, on which scarcely a stone is to be seen; but an island of basalt, whose edges resemble a rocky sea coast; its general shape is almost oval, it is sixty miles long and twenty miles broad; and it doubles our interest in this strange tract of land to know that it was really the kingdom of Og, the giant of Bashan. And he was no giant in a fairy tale, but a true Scripture giant, and the last of his race named in the 3rd chapter of Deuteronomy, 11th and 13th verses. Moses even mentions his bedstead of iron, nine cubits long and four broad, (a cubit was either fifteen or eighteen inches.)

Let us think a little longer about this giant's kingdom. The rocky island is rent in the most wonderful manner. Great wide fissures extend for miles, which can neither be crossed by man nor beast; the rugged ridges of rocks are ascended by a winding path like a goat-track, and thence Mr. Porter came suddenly on the ruins of Edrei, Og's ancient capital city. Its situation is most remarkable, without a single spring of water, without river or stream, without access except over rocks, without tree or garden. Og had thought of nothing here but security and strength: "Edrei" means "strength." Ruins and rocks alike are black as if scathed by lightning.

Digitized by Google

This adventurous traveller ascended the terrace roof of a house to obtain a general view, and saw several squares, towers, temples, churches, and mosques; the inhabitants are chiefly fanatical Moslems: and while afterwards copying an inscription he was struck down with a club, and had to escape for his life to the house of the sheikh of a small Christian community, who protected him till midnight with a Druse guard, when he and his party fled from Edrei, scarcely venturing to hope they should ever reach the plain in safety. The night was bitterly cold, their wounds were stiff and painful, and the mournful howl of the jackal, the sharp-ringing bark of the wolf, and the savage growl of the hyena were heard all around: they saw by the bright starlight and the flashing eyes that the rocks were tenanted by brute enemies as bloodthirsty as the men. Here was a practical illustration of Isaiah's prediction: "The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow."

"The Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea."

How is all this scenery so recently explored, repeopled from the pages of our Bible! We must pass on with Moses from Arnon to Edrei. (Deut. iii. 1—5.)

"Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. And the Lord said unto me, Fear him not: for I will deliver him and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. So the Lord our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining. And we took all his cities at that time: there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these

Digitized by Google

cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside unwalled towns a great many."

It will be observed by the Bible-reader, that Og was not conquered in his own stronghold; he never could have been. "We confess," says Mr. Cyril Graham, "we had often wondered how it happened that Og had been brought to fight in the plain; now from a casual notice in other parts of Scripture, (Josh. xxiv. 12), we actually find that God sent a special scourge among these Rephaim, in the shape of swarms of hornets, which we may conclude harassed them so much in their stone houses, that they preferred the alternative of meeting the Israelites, to perishing from the stings of those creatures."

God had promised this by Moses (Exod. xxiii. 28)—

"And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee.

"Moreover the Lord thy God will send the hornet among them until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed." (Deut. vii. 20.)

And Joshua speaks of it as being fulfilled. (See Josh. xxiv. 11—13.)

Edrei fell into the hands of Moses, who gave it to the half-tribe of Manasseh, with all the rest of Og's sixty cities, in the region of Argob in Bashan. The conquest appears to have been completed by Jair the son of Manasseh.

Having now an idea of "Argob," or the stony, let us return to the *Hauran*, that province of Eastern Palestine, to the south of it, twice mentioned by Ezekiel in defining the borders of the Promised Land in a day, which even to us is yet future (chap. xlvii. 16—18):

"And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea. And this is the east side."

Digitized by Google

We have heard already of foliage and herds of the "oaks of Bashan," the "fat bulls" and "kine of Bashan." The plain of the Hauran is as rich, and dotted over with a hundred towns and villages, composed of the same old stone houses, mostly *deserted*, but *not* ruined; and about them we have something more to say.

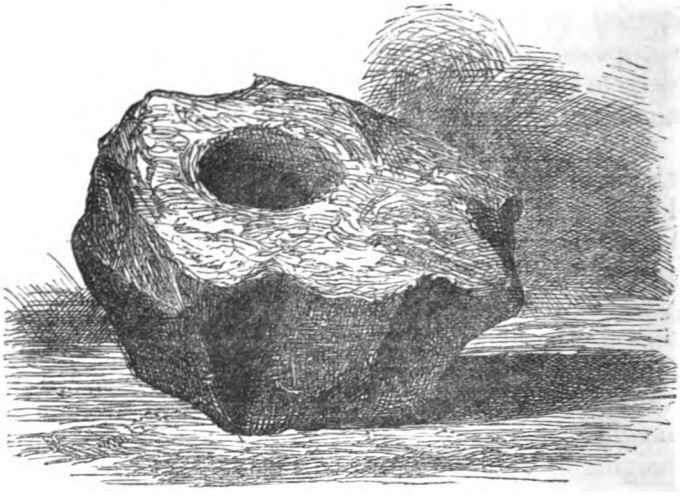
Mr. Porter and Mr. Graham both witness to the wonderful productiveness of that deep, black, loamy earth, with its luxuriant grass and teeming crops of grain. No part of Palestine can be compared to it in fertility, and no wonder that the pastoral tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh preferred these wooded hills and grassy places of Eastern Palestine, to the bleak, bare range, which they saw on the west of the Jordan from the heights of Moab. You may in idea ascend the heights of the old castle of Salcah (see the picture in our fourth tract), and then open the forty-eighth chapter of the prophet Jeremiah. For it is the old cities of Kerioth and Bethgamul, Bozrah and Salcah, standing as they stood in the days of Abraham and Lot, the cities of the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, of the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in the plain of Kiriathaim (Gen. xiv.), that adventurous recent explorers now enable stay-at-home travellers to realize.

Cities still standing,—not ruined cities, but desolate and without inhabitant,—cities of four and five hundred houses composed of everlasting slabs of stone; the thick walls are built of large square stones, the floors and the flat roofs are slabs of stone, the doors and the window-shutters also stone, turning on pivots of stone.

The frontispiece of this tract shews you one of these doors, which is now in the British Museum.

Digitized by Google

Here also is a sketch of the socket in which such a door has turned.



Race after race have dwelt and died in these stone cities from the Rephaim downwards, their giant builders and first occupants, soon after the Flood. They were constructed to endure, like the pyramids of Egypt, by the children of Ham, according to the solid simplicity and massive grandeur of their specific architectural taste, whether evidenced in Egypt, Assyria, or Canaan.

The black basalt of which these cities are composed, is almost as hard as iron. "I measured," says Mr. Porter, "a door in Kerioth; it was nine feet high, and four and a half feet wide, and ten inches thick. I saw folding stone gates in another town in the mountains, still larger, just such as a race of giants would build. They are, I believe, eternal witnesses of the narratives by Moses of the conquests of Jehovah, and the only specimens in the

Digitized by Google

world of the ordinary private dwellings of remote antiquity."

The monuments designed by imperial Rome are fast mouldering to ruin in this land; Greek temples and tombs are shattered or prostrate in the dust,—but the simple massive houses of the Rephaim are perfect as if only completed yesterday.

"In the Beth-gamul of Jeremiah xlviii., not far south of Kerioth," says Mr. Graham, "I wandered about quite alone in the old streets of the town; entered one by one the houses, went upstairs, looked into the rooms, and made a careful survey all around. So perfect was every street, every house, and every room, that I could almost have fancied, as I was wandering alone in this city of the dead, seeing all perfect and yet not hearing a sound, that I had come upon one of those enchanted palaces that one reads of in the 'Arabian Nights,' where the population of a whole city had been petrified for hundreds of years.

"These old houses are perfectly adapted to receive new tenants. The Druses, supposed descendants of the old Moabites, are now the only settled inhabitants of a few of them; and all they do in taking possession, is to throw down a mat or a piece of carpet, and to bring with them the few cooking utensils of which they have need. When they shut their stone doors, they are secure from all attacks. As soon as the early rains fall, they may begin to sow in the fertile soil around these ancient dwellings; but, as the corn ripens, their difficulties increase. They must be constantly on the watch to defend families, flocks, and corn, against the Arab—the 'wild-ass man,' the son of Hagar, of Genesis xvi. 12, 'whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him, and who dwells in

Digitized by Google

the presence of all his brethren.' Oh, how old is the heritage of the desert!—as old as these old stone dwellings of the people of the land in Ishmael's time!"

The Moabites and Ammonites, as descendants of Lot, were permitted to destroy the Hamites. The Lord said to Moses—

"Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession. The Emims dwelt therein in time past, a people great, and many, and tall, which also were accounted giants." (Deut. ii. 9, 10, 11).

The Moabites dwelt to the south of Bashan; we are aware of *their* dark descent, and may now be induced to search for all that is said of them in Scripture. The nursery of this race was Zoar; and while the roving and unsettled brother, Ammon, wandered to the north-east, and took possession of the tracks formerly occupied by the giant Zuzim, or children of Ham (see Gen. xiv. and Deut. ii. 21), Moab, whose habits were more settled and peaceful, remained nearer to the south-east of the Dead Sea.

We have now, however, realized Israel, under the guidance of their great law-giver, entering on the country beyond Arnon.

The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, inhabited for seven centuries these ancient cities of Bashan, and dwelt in the stead of their former occupants (see 1 Chron. v. 22), till they themselves were carried captive by Tiglath-Pileser, to the cities of the Medes, to Ghozan, and Halah, and Habor, which latter is, according to Mr. Layard, the modern Khabour, in the region of the Euphrates.

The narrative is continued in the way of successive events, in Numbers xxii. 2:

Digitized by Google

"And Balak the son of Zippor [king of the Moabites at this time] saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And he sent messengers to Balaam, saying, Come, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me."

Led to the top of Pisgah (whence Moses himself afterwards went to survey the Promised Land, west of the Jordan, and to die), Balaam gazes also from these hills on the mighty host abiding in their tents, and, moved by the resistless power of God's Spirit, owns that he dare neither curse nor defy this people whom the Lord hath blessed, whom God hath brought out of Egypt, who have as it were the strength of an unicorn; who are to rise up as a great lion, and not lie down till they eat of the prey and drink the blood of the slain.

How thankful we ought to be in these latter days, for the books that are constantly coming out to illustrate the Bible, and to prove to modern eyes the extreme accuracy of its historical details! Chapter after chapter in the Old Testament, full of ancient names and threatening prophecies, hitherto of apparently no concern to *us*, is often now suddenly brought to notice, as an indisputable document that verifies the research of a recent traveller, or the discoveries of an eminent antiquarian. And so God in His own time restores the old inhabitants of that particular region to our memory. Thus the learned, who may hitherto have studied every book *but* their Bible, are not left without witness to direct their attention to the inspired volume, which may lead them in the way of eternal life.

The first twenty years of this century revealed the existence of these cities by the travels of Burckhardt (who followed Seetzeen through the desolate region), disguised as an Arab, and professing to be a merchant in search of saltpetre, the "gunpowder salt," which accumulates profusely

Digitized by Google

within those deserted chambers; but otherwise all this fair land of Eastern Palestine lay hidden from the eyes of the men of the West, from the time that the Saracen power superseded the Roman in that locality. Ishmael has long entered into the inheritance of Isaac, and the promise of dominion to Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates *has yet to be fulfilled.*

Race after race has left its mighty marks in Bashan: the giants their ponderous workmanship, of the character of our own Druidical stones. Then follow Jewish masonry and names; Greek temples and inscriptions; Roman roads; Christian churches; Saracenic mosques; Turkish desolations,—all alike confirming the perfect accuracy and truth of the Bible history. *And, more strange than all,* will be the winding up of the wondrous tale of successive empires in Eastern Palestine, according to the voice of prophecy, *in a return of God's people Israel to these selfsame ancient cities.*

The last blessing of Moses to Dan, is—

"Dan is a lion's whelp, he shall leap from Bashan." (Deut. xxxiii. 22.)

not Reuben, or Gad, or Manasseh, who in the time of Moses received this possession, but Dan, whose name is blotted from the list of the tribes in the book of Revelation.

In Isaiah's wondrous prophecies of restoration to Israel he says:

"For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." (Isaiah liv. 3).

"And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, *even* all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are fenced, and are inhabited." (Ezek. xxxvi. 10, 35).

Digitized by Google

"Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD. Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities." (Jer. xxxi. 20, 21).

That it was given to Moses of the Holy Spirit to see the scattering and the *final* return of His people, the whole book of Deuteronomy forbids us to doubt, especially chapter xxx. 4, 5:

"If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it: and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers."

He was then in the wilderness with Israel in their last year before their entrance to the land.

This book of Deuteronomy appears to have been written in the plains of Moab, a short time before his death, 1451 B.C.: his death itself, as recorded in the 34th chapter, was probably added by his successor, Joshua; and the last four verses of that chapter, which concern Joshua, were, it is most likely, written by Ezra the scribe, when he collected the books of the Old Testament together.

A little before the repeating of the Law, Moses had held up to the suffering people the serpent of brass upon a pole, that every one who was bitten, when he looked upon it, might live (Num. xxi. 9), —the type, as our Lord tells us (John iii. 14, 15), of His own lifting up on the Cross, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." That shore of the Red Sea, where the Israelites were bitten, is still remarkable for abounding in serpents, as indeed the wilderness does generally. In Deut. viii. 15, Moses calls it "a

Digitized by Google

great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought"; yet we never hear of the people being bitten and killed by them till now. They had been marvellously protected from this, as from other dangers of the way; and the protection was only now withdrawn on account of their oft-repeated sin of murmuring.

They had, however, nearly finished their course in the wilderness, and would not much longer murmur against their great leader, for he was about to ascend Mount Nebo, and to die! And he left them saying, "Secret things belong to God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of the Law." (Deut. xxix. 29.)

Yes! he left behind him the revealed and written LAW OF GOD for that people, besides the wonderful book of Job.

He had looked upon all Egypt's glory. He had seen a nation fall before him in the wilderness; he had been made the means of giving God's revelation to earth; and now he himself was about to pass into the fuller revelations of heaven.

Having ordered the elders of Israel on the day that they should pass over Jordan, to set up great stones and plaster them with plaster, and themselves to write upon them all the words of the Law very plainly (Deut. xxvii. 2.), Moses ascended the Abarim range overlooking the Dead Sea.

The accomplished recent traveller, Mr. H. B. Tristram, has given a most interesting description of the mountain which *he* considers to be Mount Nebo: "On those brows overlooking the mouth of the Jordan, over against Jericho, we halted, and gazed at a prospect on which it has been permitted to few European eyes to feast. The day was clear,

Digitized by Google

and revealed to us (whether or not we were standing on the exact spot), at least, the very same landscape as that on which Moses, the servant of the Lord, closed the eye of his mortality. The height of this brow cannot be less than 4,500 feet, so completely does it overlook the heights of Hebron and of central Judea. To the eastward, as we turned round, rolled in one vast unbroken expanse the goodly Belka, one boundless plain, one waving ocean of corn and grass, stretching down towards the rosy granite peaks of Arabia. Well may such wealth of soil have poured forth its teeming myriads of flocks and herds, the riches of that mighty sheepmaster, the king of Moab of old. Not a tree nor a bush could be seen; but the glass revealed the black tents of the Beni Sakk'r, dotted in clusters far and near, testifying that the population, though vagrant and far short of the teeming multitude of the Roman cities, must still be very great. Turning westwards, in front of us, two or three lines of mountain terraces descended to the Dead Sea. It lay like a long strip of molten metal beneath our feet, with the sun mirrored on its surface. Then, almost in the centre of the line a break in the ridge, and a green spot below, marked Engedi, the nest of the ancient rock-dwellers, and now of the wild goat. Still far below us, and lower too, than the ridge of Hebron, we saw Bethlehem, and not the buildings of Jerusalem, but all the familiar points in the neighbourhood; the Mount of Olives, with the church at its top; the gap in the hills leading up from Jericho, and the rounded heights of Benjamin on its other side. Closer still beneath us, had Israel's vast camp extended in front of our green-fringed terraces."

The dark, sinuous bed of Jordan, clearly defined near its mouth, was soon lost in dim haze. Then,

Digitized by Google

looking over that, the eye rested on Gerizim's rounded top, and further still opened the plain of Esdraelon, the shoulder of Carmel, just showing to the right of Gerizim; while the faint and distant bluish haze beyond it told us that *there* was the sea, the utmost sea, the Mediterranean. It seemed as if but a whiff of air were needed to reveal it clearly. Northwards again, rose the outline of Tabor, aided by which we could identify Gilboa. The snowy top of Hermon was mantled with cloud, and Lebanon's highest range must have towered behind it; but in front, due north of us, stretched the dark forests of Ajalon, with the steep bold sides of mountains, terminating in Mount Gilead; the Bozrah too was distinctly visible.

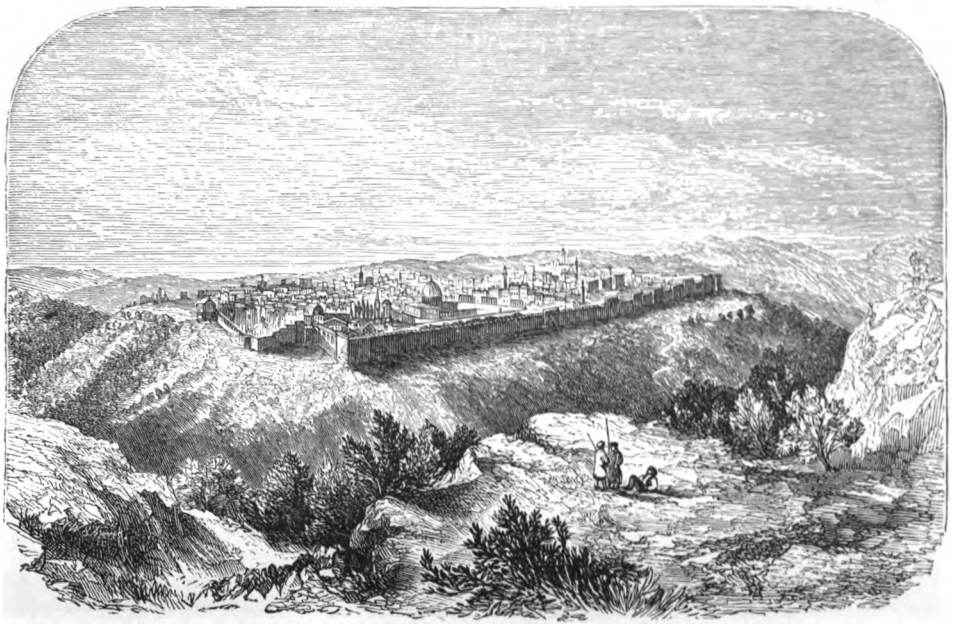
"And the Lord showed Moses all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea; and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar." (Deut. xxxiv. 1—3).

He went up as he had often done before, to be alone with God—but to return to men no more. Farewell, then, to Moses as he ascends Mount Nebo—his eye not dim, nor his natural force abated, though he had borne the burden of 120 years.

He was not sinless; he was not to be worshipped; and lest he should have been (for never was human being so visibly endued with Divine power), God marked his only recorded sin with punishment,—the great punishment of not entering the Promised Land; but that circumstance was employed as a type, that *the Law*, which he personified, cannot conduct us into the heavenly Canaan. Joshua, who took possession, is, as his name signifies, the type of Jesus, through whom only is obtained the "abundant entrance" "by grace and not by works."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



JERUSALEM.

Digitized by Google

THE TIMES OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

JOSHUA, MOSES' MINISTER.

No. XI.

THE last chapter of Deuteronomy in our Bibles may in former days have belonged rather to the succeeding Book of Joshua; for the Hebrew Bible, as we have shewn you, was written in columns on parchment or leather, and without the present divisions of chapter and verse. These were chiefly adopted for the convenience of finding particular passages; and the holy books were first thus divided by Cardinal Hugo only about 600 years ago.

The first *English* Bible divided into verses was printed at Geneva in 1560, and our own King James's "Authorized English Bible," published in 1611, and now in use, adopted these divisions from Archbishop Parker's, or "The Bishop's Bible," published previously.

The substance of the last chapter of Deuteronomy, —the death of Moses, was presented to you in our last Tract; and now we begin the *historical* books of the Bible which carry on the narrative beyond Moses as far as Esther, the beautiful Jewess who became the Persian Queen.

These books are in number *twelve*, and they take in the history of well-nigh a thousand years, from the death of Moses to the reforms effected by Nehemiah after the seventy years' captivity in Babylon, when a small remnant returned to the land of their fathers, to hold it henceforth as vassals only to superior lords.

Digitized by Google

The Book of Genesis comprised to the death of Joseph, 1635 B.C. 2369 years.
From Joseph's death to the birth of Moses there were . . . . 64 „
Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy were all written during the life of Moses . . 120 „
The Book of Joshua comprises . 25 „
and brings us to the 2578th year of the world, and to the 1427th year before the coming of Christ.

The Book of Joshua contains the stirring story of a great military hero, living in the age of miracles; and its first twelve chapters, at least, bear internal evidence of having been written by an eye-witness, if not by Joshua's own pen, with here and there an addition by an after scribe. In the last chapter—Joshua himself is said to have written the words of the Covenant—the words of the last Covenant he made with the people in the Book of the Law of God; but in the whole Book of Joshua, otherwise, there is a striking and marked change from Moses speaking in the first person, and recording the words of God and his own words, viz., 'The Lord said unto me,' etc., to the narrative of what *Joshua* did and said—by some one else—perhaps by Eleazar, the high priest and son of Aaron, whose duty it was, not only to instruct the people by reading and speaking to them of the law, but also by writing to instruct posterity in the acts and ways of God. We are first introduced to Joshua by a touching title: "Moses' minister," and informed that the Lord spake to him, saying,

"Arise, go over this Jordan.

"As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant

Digitized by Google

commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Now this is the book—*none other than the Pentateuch*, which people who fancy themselves wise, are setting aside as unworthy to be believed in one part and another, at this advanced age of the world,—but still it holds true, dear friends, and may you always believe it—that those who turn not from it to the right hand or to the left *are prospered* like Joshua whithersoever they go. They *do* find cause still "to meditate therein day and night," and *so* "they make their way prosperous," and *so* "they have good success."

Is not this the history of our Bible-woman movement? The blessed Book is our crest and our shield. It goes before us in all our ways, and upon our trust in this ancient, everlasting Word of the God of Israel—He still, to this hour, bestows His blessing. Go, read afresh the marvellous narratives in the first twelve chapters of the Book of Joshua, and observe how the Lord was with that new leader —even "as he was with Moses."

From the acacia groves of Shittim, on the east of Jordan, Joshua sends two men to view the land, even Jericho. When escaped to the scarped heights that overhang it, by the advice of Rahab, for three days, they doubtless did thus view it, and brought back the news that the history of Israel, was known to the Canaanites; how the Lord had dried up the water of the Red Sea for His people; and also the wars of Moses with the giants Sihon and Og whom he had utterly destroyed; which had caused the hearts of the men of Jericho to melt with fear.

Digitized by Google

And now the majesty of their *entrance* on the wilderness life is mated by their *exit* from it; and the true measure of the *first* miracle, illustrated, by the *second* sweeping of a path through the waters, the Divine object being one and the same in both miracles, a rapid transit of the people altogether.

At the brim of the water stand the priests with the ark upon their shoulders. At a distance of a mile behind followed the great mass of the people.

Suddenly as the soles of the feet of the priests touch the water, the full bed of the Jordan is dried before them, "very far," as far as the eye could reach (the names of cities are given as boundaries), the waters which come down from the Sea of Tiberias stood and rose up upon an heap. (Moses had said that the Red Sea had stood "up right as an heap;" and also that its waters were a wall on the right hand and the left.) Now the priests go forward, enter the river, and stand firm on dry land in the midst of Jordan. The waters of Jordan are piled up above, and cut off from the Dead Sea,* and the host of Israel pass over on either side of the symbol of the divine presence, while the priestly bearers halt in the middle of the bed. This is all recorded in the fourth chapter of Joshua, and referred to in the Book of Psalms.

* This sea, scripturally called "the Salt Sea," (by the western world "the Dead Sea,") is the final receptacle of the river Jordan, the lowest and largest of the three lakes which interrupt the rush of his descending course from the Lebanon. The Salt Sea has no visible outlet. The level of its waters, more than 1,300 feet below the surface of the ocean, is the lowest in the world. It is nowhere said that the sinful cities of the plain were submerged in this sea. They had been destroyed 450 years before the passage of the Israelites, by "fire and brimstone rained from heaven."

Digitized by Google

"The sea saw, and fled, Jordan was driven back. . . . .
"What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?" (Ps. cxiv. 3, 5.)

These two verses settle the whole question. The stupendous scale of both miracles, and the value of every word of Scripture employed to describe them, is corroborated by a decisive proof when Joshua (the sole adult survivor of the *first* miracle except Caleb,) describes it to the generation born in the wilderness, and to those who were 'little ones' at the crossing of the Jordan (see Deut. i. 39), and in that day had no knowledge between good and evil.

"For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before *us*, until *we* were gone over." Josh. iv. 23.

Joshua certainly knew the facts of both miracles, and had not the one been the counterpart of the other, *he* would not have compared them; and the change of persons from 'you' and 'ye' to 'us' and 'we' distinguishes with historical exactness the past and the then present generation.

The people of Israel might have proceeded towards the Promised Land without crossing the Red Sea at all; and they might have crossed the Jordan where it was a brook, near its source; but they were ordered to cross *its full stream*, in order that the nations they were to conquer might perceive their mission from God; and it is said, "neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel."

The twelve memorial stones which the tribes had by command, brought up out of the bed of Jordan were pitched upon the rising ground of Gilgal, where Joshua encamped to the east of Jericho, and which

Digitized by Google

then overlooked a forest of palms between them and the city of Jericho. The last tree of this palm forest, seen as late as 1838, has now disappeared. It must have recalled to the invaders, the palm groves of Egypt, and as it was the time of the barley harvest they must have seen stretching through the spaces under the trees, fields of ripe corn.

Here at Gilgal the reproach of their uncircumcision was rolled away, for this ordinance had been neglected in the desert wanderings; and the next event was the celebration of the Passover—a new observance to most of the people, the generation who had been educated in the free, pure air of the wilderness, while their fathers were dying out for their unbelief.

The Passover had been observed only once in Egypt, and once again at Sinai, and this was its third celebration.

On the next morning, the manna ceased to fall: the "old corn" of the Promised Land supplied its place.

The great *new* leader of Israel had already been owned by the people, all that he commanded them they had promised to *do*, and wherever he sent them to *go*. Like Moses, he was the guardian and student of the written revelation. Each read it to the people, and caused them to act upon it. Joshua lived twenty-five years after taking them into the land; and as he died at 110, he must have known for forty-five years what was the bondage of Egypt, and must have seen all, except Caleb, die around him in the wilderness; and he was now appointed as the conquering general of the people with whom God had made a covenant, to destroy every other league and covenant existing among the Canaanitish

Digitized by Google

nations. That God had *given* him the strength and courage to which he was exhorted may be seen in the narrative of his going up to the man with the drawn sword, by Jericho, saying, "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?"

"And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?

"And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

"*So* the Lord was with Joshua;" and then came the first act in "the wars of the Lord," the siege of Jericho, and the falling of its massive walls to the blare of the trumpets; and the saving of Rahab according to promise, and the forbidding of the "accursed thing" to be taken from the city. This was neither silver nor gold, nor brass nor iron, for those were to come into the treasury of the Lord; but some symbol or sign, as we may fairly conclude, which was prominent in idolatrous worship.

Let us look for the light that Scripture throws on this "accursed thing."

It is spoken of by Moses in the seventh chapter of Deuteronomy as to be found among the seven nations of Canaan, greater and mightier than Israel whom the Lord would destroy utterly before them, and with whom therefore no covenant was to be made.

"The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it *is* an abomination to the Lord thy God.

Digitized by Google

"Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: *but* thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it *is* a cursed thing."

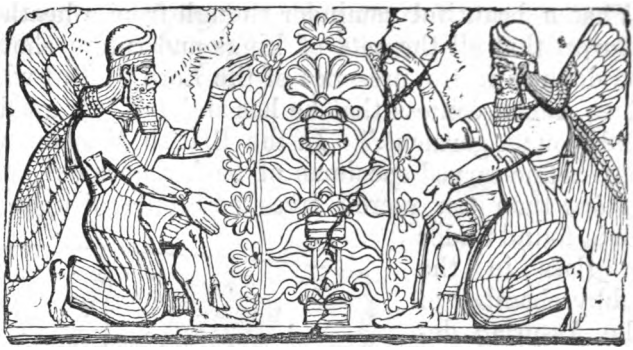
Now Achan's sin was the first open transgression of this command. The Lord tells Joshua (vii. 11) that Israel have taken of the accursed thing, and have stolen, and dissembled also, and have put it among their own stuff; and Achan's confession was not of the secreting of any visible idol, but only of "the goodly garment," and of "200 shekels of silver" and a "wedge or tongue of gold" of fifty shekels weight.

In the fifth verse of the seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, of the "graven images" above defined as the accursed thing, it is said:—

"Thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire."

Now it had long been known by Hebrew scholars that the word which is here translated "groves" should have been left a proper name, as in the original, and that this name was Assheerah. Even before the Assyrian sculptures were brought to light Dr. Margoliouth had pointed out that the Assheerah was a *symbolical tree* representing the host of heaven. "No one," says Mr. Ferguson, "can now read the passages in the Bible referring to the worship of the groves without seeing that they do not mean a group of trees, but must refer to just such a symbol or idol as that here figured." In Judges iii. 7 it is said, "the children of Israel forgat the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves." There is always a tradition of a sacred tree in all Eastern systems of idolatry, and this tree of the Assyrian monuments is, as we have seen,

Digitized by Google



SACRED TREE AND HEATHEN CHERUBIM.

very often accompanied by the symbol of the "presence" of Ashur over it (see p. 39) *to which presence alone belonged worship and sacrifice.* This presence attended the king in his battles, and was



THE PRESENCE OF ASSHUR IN THE TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION.

carved on his signet, and embroidered on his robes.



A ROYAL CYLINDER OR SIGNET.

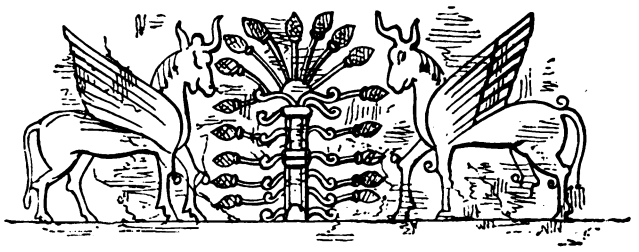
Digitized by Google

What a beautiful reminder though from a heathen source, that all the acts of kings and rulers should be done as in the presence of the Lord! But what does Achan confess that he has stolen? "A goodly Babylonish garment." In the British Museum we have a fine carved specimen of such a garment, *with no less* than ten sacred trees embroidered upon it. It is found under a glass in the lobby chamber of the Assyrian department, and the date attached to it is 1120 *before Christ*, and three hundred years after Joshua's time. Nevertheless, there is evidence in the Book of Joshua of a goodly garment coming from Babylon, and being an "accursed thing," probably from its idolatrous embroidery. It is fringed with the Assheerah, dress and helmet also, and similar emblems odious to God, as caricatures of the Cherubic forms at



Digitized by Google

Eden's gate, are found by careful search, though not at first obvious to the eye, on the dress of the kings of Nineveh, as well as on the winged figures that



SACRED TREE AND GRIFFINS ON DRESS OF KINGS OF NINEVEH.

attend them; so that there was long-enduring meaning in this peculiar ornament, and owing no doubt to its widespread use among the Canaanitish nations also, did it become such a snare to Israel in the after times of the Judges and the Prophets. We now see how closely connected with the worship of Baal were the *Chammânîm*, rendered in the margin of most passages "Sun Images" (see 2 Chron. xxxiv. 4). During King Josiah's reformation he brake down the altars of Baalim, in his twelfth year, and the *Sun Images that were on high above them* he cut down, and the groves (or Assheerah), etc. In Elijah's time the prophets of Baal were four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the "groves" four hundred, which ate at Jezebel's table (1 Kings xviii. 19).

The other "accursed thing" that Achan had taken was the "wedge" or tongue or triangle of gold, which another Babylonian monument of the same date, 1120 B.C. throws light upon. These

Digitized by Google

two curious Babylonian monuments in the museum are thought to have been landmarks, and are covered with curses on those who remove them. They are at the head of the stairs which descend to SENNACHERIB'S hall. One of them is of black marble, in the shape of a massive fish. On the head, which is three-sided, a large serpent is carved, and around him, are scattered arrow-headed characters, which decipherers say, commence the curses of the inscription. An arrow-head or wedge also appears as an offering on an altar. The early Babylonians worshipped their god "Anu" (supposed to be Noah) under the form of a wedge. "Anu" means also "the word." There is a remarkable stone altar now in the National Library of Paris, which was found among the ruins of Babylon upon which is laid a *long triangular wedge*, thus shown to have been *worshipped* in Chaldea; perhaps as the first letter of the earliest alphabet, of which our A retains the outline. This may have been the wedge of gold that Achan stole.



All these idolatries of men and kings were "accursed" in the sight of Jehovah. They broke His *first*

Digitized by Google

commandment, and from the decree for the stoning and burning of Achan for the sake of the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold—to *all* such sin committed through the reigns of all the kings of Judah and Israel, the curse of the Lord extended, and the people were punished accordingly, during their trial or probation era of almost 800 years in the land of promise.

And, alas, through the reigns of all the kings, Israel built them images *and groves* "on every high hill and under every green tree" (1 Kings xiv. 23). When it came to Manasseh's building altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord, *and setting up a graven image of the groves* that he had made, in the very temple of Solomon,* the *trial* era of the chosen nation was declared to be at an end: "Cast them out, . . . let them go forth," saith the Lord. "I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, . . . for that which Manasseh did in Jerusalem" (Jer. xv. 1, 4), "to be chastised seven times for their sins" (Lev. xxvi. 18, 24, 28), "to receive at the Lord's hand double for all their sins." (Isa. xl. 2.)

But if there were this sad *ending* to their probation, they were only just *entering* upon it, under their great hero Joshua. Jericho has fallen to the sound of his trumpets, and Ai has bowed to his spear, and now he builds an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal.

"As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings.

"And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.

* 2 Kings xxi. 7.

Digitized by Google

The people having crossed the Jordan, are come again to Schechem or Nablus, the frontispiece of our third tract. It is marked also on the edge of the map of Eastern Palestine in the same number. It was to Shechem and to Gerizim that it had been foretold that they *would* come again in the fourth generation, according to the vision of their great forefather, bringing Joseph's bones, which they had carried with them, by his desire, through all their forty years of desert wandering (Gen. l. 25); and they buried them in Shechem, in the inheritance of the children of Joseph (Josh. xxiv. 32). "At the mouth of the Valley of Shechem two slight breaks are visible, in the midst of the vast plain of corn—one a white Mussulman chapel, the other a few fragments of stone; the first covers the alleged tomb of Joseph, Ishmael's mark of present triumph over Isaac's exiled race; the other, THE WELL, choked up by ruins, but still the well of 'our father Jacob.'"

Here, while the ark remained in the valley, up the sides of the twin mountains stood the thousands of Israel, the chiefs, the judges, the Levites, the women, the children, and the stranger, six tribes uttering the curses from the barren Ebal, and six the blessings from the pleasant Gerizim, and as each curse and blessing was pronounced there came with a vast voice from each of those living hills the Amen of the consenting multitudes (Josh. viii. 33).

"Those who have seen the spot," says Mr. Mills, "can readily realize the scene. Just where the two mountains approach each other nearest are the two lower spurs, looking like two noble pulpits prepared by nature—and here the Levites would stand to read. The valley running between looks just like the floor of a vast place of worship. The slopes of both mountains recede gradually, and offer room for hundreds of thousands to be conveniently seated.

Digitized by Google

"An objection has been made, that the distance between the two mountains is too great for the human voice to traverse; and this would have greater force with those who imagine the reading to have taken place on the very summits of the mountains. I am not aware whether any experiment to test the point had ever been made upon the spot, previously to my own. In company with two friends I pitched my tent in the valley, where I supposed the Ark formerly to have stood. I clambered up Gerizim and one friend up Ebal, the third party remaining with the men at the tent. I opened my Bible, and read the command concerning the blessings in Hebrew, and every word was heard most distinctly by the friend in the valley, the Rev. David Edwards of Newport, as well as by Mr. John Williams of Aberystwith, who stood on Mount Ebal. The latter then read the cursings in Welsh, and we heard every word and syllable.

"It has been observed by many authors how much farther one can see and hear in Palestine than in Great Britain, owing to the different state of the atmosphere. Dr. Robinson mentions a spot in Lebanon where the voice can be heard for two miles."

We must now endeavour to settle clearly in our minds the first conquests of Joshua in Western Palestine, accomplished under "the captain of the Lord's host," whom this hero so faithfully served.

There are three divisions in the little slip of country we call Palestine, or the Holy Land, on the Mediterranean side of Jordan:

1. The central plain of Samaria, or Esdraelon.
2. Galilee on the north of it.
3. Judea on the south.

Digitized by Google

It is but a strip of country, about the size of Wales. Its length, from Dan to Beersheba, is not 200 miles. Its breadth, from Jordan to the Mediterranean, rarely more than fifty. The highest number of its inhabitants is not reckoned at much more than *double that of London*, *i.e.*, between six and seven millions; but these were thickly congregated, for Wales has only a million of people. Palestine is, above all countries in the world, "the land of ruins—of ruins everywhere—not a hill-top but is covered by the vestiges of some fortress or city of former ages. The Saracens, the Crusaders, the Romans, the Greeks, the Jews, even the Canaanites, have all left their tokens in the land,—so long the "battle-field of Babylon and Egypt," the "high bridge between the Nile and the Euphrates," the "thoroughfare and prize of the world."

And why is it a high bridge? Because a mass of hills or mountain ranges runs up the country, bordered on both sides, east and west, by a broad belt of lowland, sunk deep below the high level. The Canaanites, Philistines, and Phœnicians lived in the plains that skirted the Mediterranean, and the settlements of the tall and haughty Anakim, or Rephaim, lay along the mountain range; it seems that, from superior size and wisdom too, they were the masters of another race of people, called the Amorites,—a degraded nation, and very wicked, and whose "iniquity was full" at the time that Israel entered the land.

The Rephaim had military outposts and fortresses in strong positions among the mountains. They had even a city, Kirjath-sepher, or the book-city, the city of letters, or of archives. Joshua conquered it; but its records are all lost—not come down to us. We know nothing of these "tall" and "haughty"

Digitized by Google

rulers of old time, but what is said of them in the Bible, and, strange to say, what is carved and written about them on the old Egyptian temple of Karnak.

Yes! they are there,—these men of "Onk" or Anak. They are supposed to have been the shepherd-kings who once conquered Egypt; and in the reign of Rameses III., Egypt conquered them in their own land. She never records her own defeats; but she has described her conquests over the Rephaim as ranging through three centuries.

Another of the ancient cities, named on Karnak, is Hebron, or Arba, where Abraham lived, died, and was buried. This city "was built seven years before Zoan, in Egypt" (Num. xiii. 22).

The victories of Joshua comprise three distinct series of events. First, his campaign against the Amorite league, in which he swept round the mountain of Judah, returning by Hebron to Gilgal. Secondly, the campaign against the northern Canaanites,—"Joshua made war a long time with all those kings" (Josh. xi. 18). Finally, the general statements of particular expeditions against those tall Anakim, till destroyed in their cities and forts,—"there were none of the Anakim left in all the land of the children of Israel," only the Philistines in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod; and then Joshua took the whole land, and gave it for an inheritance unto Israel by their tribes (Josh. xi. 22). Balaam the son of Beor had been slain in this war (Josh. xiii. 22). Yet these conquests after all were imperfect, very much land remained to be possessed, and seven of Israel's tribes had not yet received their inheritance, when, in the eighteenth chapter of Joshua, it is said :—

"And the whole congregation of the children of Israel

Digitized by Google

assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there."

IT IS MOST IMPORTANT FULLY TO REALISE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CENTRES OF SHECHEM AND SHILOH, FOR THE SPACE OF 400 YEARS TO ANCIENT ISRAEL.

We have seen that the capital of Ephraim and of the kingdom of Israel was Shechem; its great sanctuary was SHILOH.

Shechem is considered to be the portion given to Joseph by Jacob when near his end—"the portion above his brethren." This central tract and this "good land" were naturally allotted to the powerful house of Joseph in the first division of the country; and it is very true, as has been said, that "we are so familiar with the supremacy of the house of JUDAH, that we are apt to forget its recent date comparatively with that of EPHRAIM."

Alas! as the psalm of Asaph tells us (Ps. lxxviii. 9):—

"The children of Ephraim being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law. . . . Then the Lord . . . . refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which he loved."

The sites of heathen oracles have been always shrines for classic pilgrimages; but the site of SHILOH was completely forgotten from the time of Jerome until the year 1838. *Yet here the tabernacle of the wilderness erected by Joshua abode* 300 *years* (Josh. xviii. 1). The "tent" or "tabernacle," that last relic of the wandering life of the chosen people, is described in the Rabbinical traditions as a structure of low stone walls, with a tent drawn over the top, exactly answering to the Bedouin villages of the present day, where the stone enclosures often remain long after the tribes and tents have vanished. Had

Digitized by Google

it not been for the precision with which the site of Shiloh is described in the Book of Judges (xxi. 19), its situation could never have been identified with the present "Seilun:"—

"Shiloh, which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah."

Shiloh is ten miles south of Shechem, and twenty-five north of Jerusalem.

But now there is another scene at Shechem. The stalwart Joshua, the Lord's captain, "goes the way of all the earth, and again he gathers all the tribes here, and the elders and the judges present themselves before God." After reciting the Lord's dealings with them he says:—

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

"And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey.

"So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

"And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that *was* by the sanctuary of the Lord."

And it is really recorded, in the last chapter of this most interesting book, that

"Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel."

We have given you JERUSALEM as the frontispiece of this tract, because the name of "the Holy City," the *only* city of the *past*, the *present*, and the *future*, is linked for ever with the Holy Land as its metropolis; but at the same time it is with a special request *that you will observe* that Jerusalem did not

Digitized by Google

become the capital city of the Jews for 400 years after Joshua's period.

Jerusalem lay long unknown save as a heathen fortress in the midst of the Promised Land. "It is strange to think how often Joshua, Deborah, Samuel, Saul, and even David, must have passed and repassed those gray hills and spacious caverns in which David had hidden himself, when he fled to the mountains, unconscious of the fame reserved for Zion in every future age" (Ezek. v. 5).

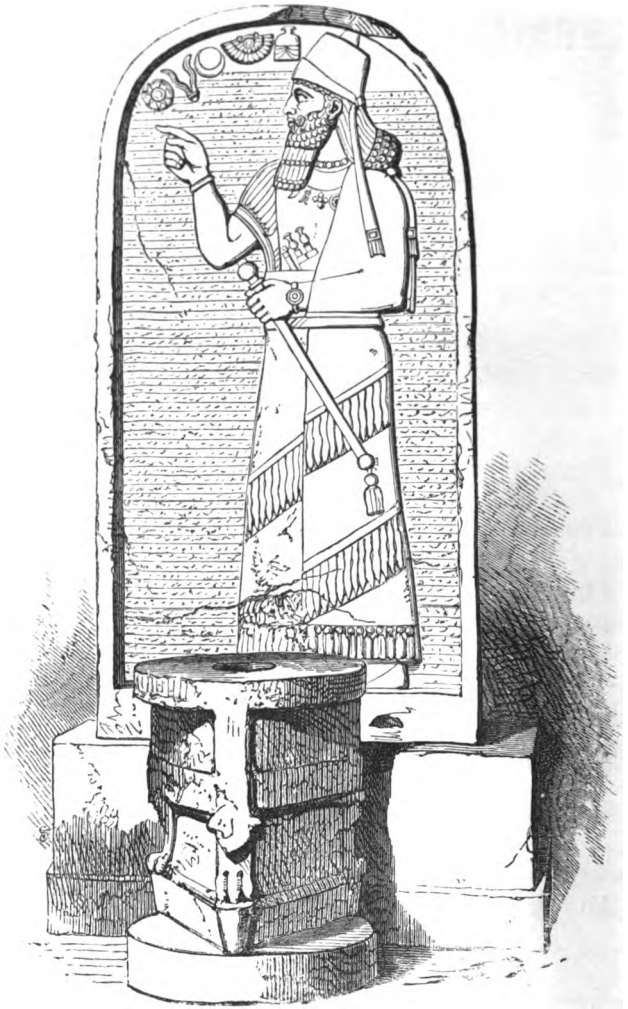
"Thus saith the Lord God; This *is* Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries *that are* round about her."

Jerusalem is situated on the edge of one of the highest table lands of the country. From every other side than that of Hebron, the ascent to it is perpetual. The city is a mountain city, enthroned on a mountain fastness. Deep and precipitous ravines guard it on the west, south, and east. On the north this city is on a level with the mountain plains. A long and deep ravine divides it into two unequal portions, one lower than the other. That on the west is the Mount Zion, and was the early fortress of the Jebusites, and defied the attacks of Joshua.

The eastern hill is lower and smaller. Here was Mount Moriah, and on this brow at present stands the great mosque of Omar. The earliest notices of Jerusalem are in Joshua xii. 10 and xv. 8, when Joshua is said to smite its king. In Judges xix. 10, we hear of "Jebus, which is Jerusalem." It is mentioned also in Judges i. 7. But it is David who removes the seat of government from Hebron to Jerusalem, and who makes it the metropolis of the tribe of Judah 1047 B.C., or 396 years after Joshua's death. Solomon lays the foundation of the Temple, B.C. 1011, or 480 years after the coming out of Egypt.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



A KING OF NINEVEH AND HIS ALTAR.

Digitized by Google

THE TIMES OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

No. XII.

"The Book of JUDGES is to the *Old Testament* what the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES and the Book of REVELATION are to the *New*."—*Canon Wordsworth.*

THE Book of JUDGES is connected with the Book of Joshua as closely as Joshua is with the five Books of Moses.

See its first sentence:—

"Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass."

The conquests of the great general, as related in the twelfth chapter of Joshua, seem to be continued in the first chapter of Judges by the houses of Judah and Simeon and Joseph; "the Lord was with *them* (vers. 19, 22); but the tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphthali, are mentioned as *not* driving out the Canaanites; and an angel or messenger of the Lord rebukes them with a voice from God at Bochim, and for a season the people weep and repent. The account of Joshua's death and burial is then repeated (ii. 8, 9), as if taken up again from the close of the Book of Joshua; and the words are quoted thus, that,

"Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel."

And then, alas, it is added,

"That when all that generation were gathered to their fathers, then arose another generation after them which knew *not* the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel."

Digitized by Google

This new generation forsook the Lord, and served Baalim and Ashtaroth, and the Lord in His anger delivered them "into the hands of spoilers," and "sold them into the hands of their enemies, and they were greatly distressed." Then His mercy mingled with judgment, and it is written :—

"Nevertheless, the Lord raised up JUDGES, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies all the days of the Judges."

Now here is the key to the plan of the *whole* book. *Its first fourteen* chapters bring us down to the death of Samson, and are almost entirely a history of these wars of deliverance. The author had a certain design in view; to show that the sufferings of the Hebrews after the death of Joshua were owing to their apostasy from Jehovah and their idolatry. When they repent and obey, they are pardoned and delivered. To illustrate this fact, the writer collects striking fragments of their personal history, which prove his point, between the times of Joshua and Eli. His design does not seem to be to give a complete national history of the Hebrews. If it had been, he would surely have named the number of tribes for whom a judge arose, and the relation in which they stood to other tribes, for a judge was not a king set over all the tribes. These judges were temporary and special deliverers sent by God to meet certain emergencies. They were *not* supreme magistrates succeeding to the authority of Moses and Joshua.

There is a kind of appendix to the Book of Judges, beginning with the 17th chapter, and continuing to the close of the book, in which there is no mention made of any judge; but we find allusions to the "house of God," the "ark" and the "high priest,"

Digitized by Google

and the period of this part of the history of the people is marked thus :—

"When there was no king in Israel" (Judges xix. 1).

The appendix contains two narratives illustrating the previous times of lawlessness and anarchy, that of Micah, who worshipped molten and graven images, and that of the dreadful history of the Levite's concubine, and the consequent massacre of almost the whole tribe of Benjamin. The appendix, therefore, describes the times of lawlessness, in contrast to the peaceful times described in the Book of RUTH, which originally it is said formed a part of the Book of Judges; but which from the time the Bible was translated into Greek has taken its place as a separate book.

The lawless times are also alluded to in Deborah's song. When travellers were afraid to go by the highways, and chose byways for safety; and when quiet villages seemed to have been forsaken of their inhabitants for fear :

"Then I Deborah arose—a mother in Israel" (Judges v. 7).

To restore, doubtless, the influence of good mothers in the nation; and she stirs up Barak to the conquest of Sisera. Extraordinary mention is made of Deborah. She dwelt in Mount Ephraim, under the palm-tree which was named from her, as the oak was from her predecessor and namesake, Rachel's nurse. The palm-tree is supposed to have been rare in Palestine, and therefore mentioned. Under its shadow the children of Israel came up to Deborah for judgment. She is evidently an inspired prophetess, for she foretold the death of Sisera by the hand of Jael.

The institution of the order of Judges took place before the Hebrews lost their great leader Moses,

Digitized by Google

who had been their prophet, priest, and even "king in Jeshurun;" *he* appointed for them JUDGES, by Jethro's counsel, "able men, such as fear God; men of truth, hating covetousness," to preside over sections of the people (Ex. xviii. 21). They were chosen at first for *moral* fitness, and while the Levites instructed the people in the Law, the Judges enforced its fulfilment. The Judges mentioned as standing before Joshua (chap. xxiv. 1), had doubtless been elected from the same class of patriarchal senators.

The Levites were also the keepers of the standard weights and measures in the sanctuary, to which, in case of dispute, reference was to be made. The high priest was the chief judge in the nation before kings were appointed, and always in case of need would be supernaturally directed in his decisions, *i.e.*, he would "inquire of the Lord" by the appointed means. Yet we hear of no high priest acting as judge but Eli, and it has been remarked, as a fact of some weight, that none of the special deliverers of Israel called judges, except Samuel, were of the *priestly* tribe, and that few of them became as much noted as Deborah. The judges were fifteen in number.

During their times, *i.e.*, between the days of Joshua and SAMUEL (who combined in his own person the offices of judge, high-priest, and prophet), the Israelites suffered six servitudes:—

1. To Mesopotamia's king	. .	8 years.
2. To Moab . . .	. .	18 ,,
3. To Jabin and Sisera .	. .	20 ,,
4. To Midian . . .	. .	7 ,,
5. To Ammon . . .	. .	18 ,,
6. To the Philistines .	. .	40 ,,
	Total	111 years.

Digitized by Google

Definite periods are also named, during which they were delivered by the JUDGES from captivity:—

1st Judge.	Othniel,	who governed	40	years.
2nd ,,	Ehud	,,	80	,,
3rd ,,	Shamgar	,,	—	,,
4th ,,	Deborah and Barak	,,	40	,,
5th ,,	Gideon	,,	40	,,
6th ,,	Abimelech	,,	3	,,
7th ,,	Tola	,,	23	,,
8th ,,	Jair	,,	22	,,
9th ,,	Jepththah	,,	6	,,
10th ,,	Ibzan	,,	7	,,
11th ,,	Elon	,,	10	,,
12th ,,	Abdon	,,	8	,,
13th ,,	Samson	,,	20	,,
14th ,,	Eli	,,	40	,,
15th ,,	Samuel	,,	—	,,
			339	
		Add	111	the time of the servitude.

And the total is 450 years.

By the statements of these years it appears that the Book of Judges exactly agrees with St. Paul's reckoning, *if he did thus reckon.* See Acts xiii. 19—20.

"And when God had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

"And after that he gave *unto them* judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet."

Such is the reading of our English translation; but this would disagree with the important statement in 1 Kings vi. 1—that the temple of Solomon began to be built in the 480th year after the Exodus—a date which we do not know how to part with, in the Hebrew chronology. Canon Words-

Digitized by Google

worth, however, who would be the last to trifle with an Apostle's testimony, whether in figures or facts, brings fresh light to this question concerning Old Testament history. He considers that the 450 years in Acts xiii. "is grounded on an erroneous reading and interpretation of St. Paul's words," and says that the *true* reading has been happily restored from the oldest MSS. in the Latin, Coptic, and Armenian versions—viz., that "after about 450 years, *i.e.*, from the great epoch to which St. Paul had referred at the beginning of his speech, the *birth of* Isaac, the people entered into and possessed the land. The reception of Israel into covenant with God in Isaac *was* about 450 years before their entering the land.

Birth of Isaac	1896 B.C.
Conquest of Canaan . . .	1446 B.C.
	450

It is generally considered that some of the judges judged only *portions* of Canaan, and that *more than one judged at the same time*, in different places. There is reason to suppose this of Samson and Jephthah; the one being judge in Eastern Palestine, and the other in the west, and also that Ibzan, Elan, and Abdon, of whom we know no more than their names, may have lived in the days of Samuel, who *completed* the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines (1 Sam. vii. 1—14), which Samson was only to begin. (See Judges xiii. 5.)

We now perceive how the Book of Judges follows Joshua, as in the New Testament the Acts of the Apostles follows the Gospels, or the life of Jesus the heavenly Joshua. We have seen how every historical book of the Old Testament after Genesis is tied to that which went before it. Every book has successively the story to tell of its own time, and

Digitized by Google

every book adds something to the course of events, which foretold and prepared the world for the coming of Christ. Therefore, in the walk to Emmaus,

"*Beginning at Moses and all the prophets*, the Lord expounded to the two disciples *in all the Scriptures*, the things concerning himself." (Luke xxiv. 27.)

Canon Wordsworth, in his Notes on the Bible, computes the events of the history as follows:—

Wanderings of Israel	40 years.
Victories of Joshua	17 ,,
First captivity to Nineveh	8 ,,
Othniel—Judge, and rest	40 ,,
Oppression by Moab	18 ,,
Ehud and rest	80 ,,
Shamgar and Jabin	20 ,,
Deborah and rest	40 ,,
Midianitish slavery	7 ,,
Gideon and rest	40 ,,
Abimelech	3 ,,
Tola	23 ,,
Jair	22 ,,
Eli, judge	40 ,,
Samuel, judge	19 ,,
Saul, king	20 ,,
David	40 ,,
Solomon to beginning of Temple	3 ,,
	480 ,,

All the history books of the Old Testament have a prophetic character, and prefigure that future coming. The Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, are called by the Hebrew church "the *former* prophets."

The *after* prophets filled up the reigns of the Jewish kings till Malachi, the last, who finished his prophecy with the key-note of the coming of Jesus Christ.

But we must turn again to the Judges before we approach the Prophets and the Kings.

Digitized by Google

The entrance into the land and the building of the Temple were earnests and figures of the entrance opened into heaven, and of the building up of the Christian Church by the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross.

The Book of Judges exhibits the miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit in some of those military heroes who were raised up from time to time to deliver Israel. The acts of only a few persons are recorded as specimens of what God the Holy Ghost wrought by them all; and the eye is often raised from the human agent, *by his personal imperfections*, only to look at what he was in the hands of God. The Book of Judges, like the Book of Revelation, is full of solemn warning, and it has been observed that the main part of both is a history of downfall and decline, in the chosen nation and in the Christian Church, through idolatry. Man glorifies himself and his own inventions and creations instead of his Creator, and the Book of Revelation shows that he will do it more and more to the end of this dispensation.

The Book of Judges is full of what Israel might have done in those wondrous days of miracle, if they had obeyed God; but, on the whole, they seldom answered to their mighty call. They served their own lusts, and sought their own interests. Perhaps they thought themselves more merciful than God when they put the Canaanites to tribute, instead of driving them out at His command; "*their* iniquity was full;" but Israel intermarried with them, and served their gods and kings. They served Baal and Ashtaroth, so the hand of the Lord was against them.

Let us specially notice who the enemies of Israel were.

Digitized by Google

They were Assyria, Moab, Midian, and the Philistines. All the light that falls upon old Assyria in the present resurrection of her images, casts a ray on the history of the Old Testament. Those enemies were the type of our spiritual enemies. In the strength of Christ we should be ourselves Othniels and Ehuds to the sins which war against our souls. "The actions of these imperfect judges are presented to us by the Holy Spirit," afterwards—* as of those who "by faith subdued kingdoms," such as Barak, Gideon, and Jephthah; "wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions," as Samson; escaped the edge of the sword, as Gideon and Samson; "out of weakness were made strong," as Deborah and Jael, "waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Truly Paul takes his examples from the Book of Judges, and therefore we are bound to study their lives and doings. Whatever be wrong or fleshly in the type of these "saviours," Jesus the antitype corrects it. They point the thoughts to a greater Gideon, who now that He is come, teaches us to read the ancient history aright, and to perceive in the story of the fleece (ch. vi. 36), the likeness of the Jewish Church and the Church Universal. The dew of heavenly teaching fell first on the fleece, and the fleece only, and not on the floor around—on the Jewish people alone, while all around was in darkness. Afterwards the dew fell on the floor, and not on the fleece—the Gospel was preached and accepted in the Gentile world, while the Jewish fleece was dry.

There are abounding lessons in the Book of Judges, for the use of modern Christians. We see that sin and misery, in a large measure, often arises from the acts of a single household, as they issued

* Heb. xi. 32.

Digitized by Google

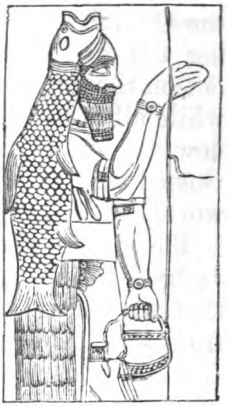
from the household of Micah, whence idolatry spread through the whole tribe of Dan. (See chapters xvii. and xviii.)

"And they set up Micah's graven image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh."

The nations all around Israel had other lords and gods than Jehovah. In Samson's history we hear of DAGON the god of the Philistines, whom they believed had delivered Samson their enemy into their hand. They took him and put out his eyes, and bound him with fetters of brass, and put him to grind in the prison house.

Now in the lapse of more than 3000 years the very form and likeness of these graven images had been forgotten; but strange to say God has caused in our day their resurrection, as witnesses of the truth of His word.

In passing along the Nineveh gallery of the British Museum, we come to a figure with a remarkable fish-cloak. It is impossible not to identify this figure, (of which Mr. Layard found several specimens), with the Dagon of Ashod, and the description 1 Sam. v. 4. He who fell before the ark of the Lord, when it was brought into his great temple at Ashdod, "and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold, only the *fishy part* of Dagon was left unto him." Here it is for our inspection. "The head of the fish forms a mitre," says Mr. Layard, "above that of the man, whilst its scaly back and fan-like tail fell as a cloak behind, leaving the human feet and hands exposed. We can scarcely



Digitized by Google

hesitate to trace this mythic form to the Oannes (Noah) or sacred manfish," who brought to the Chaldeans civilization and arts out of the sea. His worship seems to have extended over Syria, as well as Mesopotamia and Chaldea. In the tenth chapter of Judges we hear, that

"And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not him."

Perhaps the most remarkable subject that has yet been found among the ruins of ancient Assyria, was a monstrous form, whose fanciful and hideous head has long pointed ears, and extended jaws, armed with huge teeth. Its body is covered with feathers, its fore feet are those of a lion, its hind legs end in the talons of an eagle, and it has the spreading wings and tail of a bird. Arrayed against this monster is a grand figure, whose dress consists of a plain bodice with a skirt of skin or fur, an under robe fringed with tassels, and the sacred three-horned cap, which marks a supreme god; he has sandals, armlets, and braclets. A long sword is suspended from his shoulders by a belt, and he grasps in each hand a double and winged trident, which would seem to have been the original of the thunder-bolt so often represented in the hand of the Greek Jupiter.

This mighty being is in the act of hurling the tridents against the monster, who turns upon him. In the traits of this Assyrian demon, may be seen the prototype of John Bunyan's Apollyon; though John Bunyan had surely never seen this graven image. It is now happily so uncommon to find an English Bible comprising the Apocryphal or un-

Digitized by Google

inspired Books, that comparatively few persons will be able readily to turn to one of these by name; we refer to

BEL AND THE DRAGON,

to which the Assyrian illustration might well serve



BEL AND THE DRAGON.

for a frontispiece. It was inserted by the Grecian Jews in the Septuagint, and acquires a new interest in relation to this sculpture. It speaks of the idol

Digitized by Google

Bel of Babylon, for whom his priests claimed "forty sheep a day and twelve great measures of fine flour, and six vessels of wine, and the king went daily to adore it, while Daniel worshipped the Lord his God." The proof given by the prophet to the king of the hypocrisy of the seventy priests who, with their wives and children, always consumed these provisions, and his authorized destruction of Bel and his temple, and also of the "*dragon in that same place*, which they of Babylon worshipped,"—all these things point curiously back to that which now appears before our eyes in the British Museum. We have here the Chaldean Bel, or Baal, destroying the dragon, and in the Apocryphal but ancient book we have Daniel destroying both.

In the same gallery of the Museum with these gods of Babylon and Nineveh, are stone pictures of



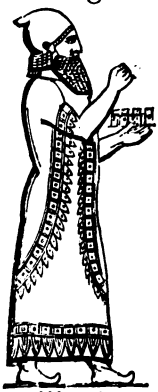
JEWS BRINGING TRIBUTE.

Digitized by Google

a race of men bringing tribute. A different race from the Assyrian warriors, who, age after age, wear a high-peaked helmet, which distinguishes *them* from any people with whom they may be at war, and *the actual old rusty peaked helmet itself* may be seen in a glass case in the Museum also.

Of one of these tribute-bearers, however, the cap is different; it is composed of felt, or folds of linen. The other has a fillet round his head, and both wear the same curious boots, turned up at the toes; on a slab opposite to the tribute-bearers, the same race, recognized by caps and boots, are fleeing on horseback, and yet turning round to fight the Assyrians, who are in chariots.

The same people are found on the black obelisk in the centre room of Assyrian relics. They have also the cap with the peak backwards, long fringed robes, and curious boots, with the toes turned up, like those of the men who are leading monkeys on the large tablet from the North-west Palace.



This is the Jewish costume which is so definitely presented to the eye, in every age of these sculptures, that we must *search the Scriptures* to see if any laws had been given for the general dress of the Chosen Nation; for that may impress a *meaning* on these peculiarities so constantly noticeable in the people whom the Assyrians have humbled and vanquished.

"The people shall dwell alone," said God, by the mouth of Balaam (Num. xxiii. 9). "Shall dwell in safety alone," says Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 28); and all the institutes of the great lawgiver tended to make them do so. Men are known by their externals; and their dress

Digitized by Google

was so arranged as to distinguish them from other people.

Fifteen hundred years after the Exodus, the historian Tacitus says of the Jews, "that they kept to their antiquated modes." If we inquire what these were, we shall find laws given to them about the *robe*, and the *beard;* and in the narrative of Daniel we have something relating to the *boots* and the *caps*. The prophet speaks of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, as cast into the burning fiery furnace "bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments." We see the Assyrian king and his warriors in helmets, but never in hats or caps, or in boots, or "hosen."

The beards differ also. The Israelite was commanded "not to mar the corners of his beard;" the peak-pointed beard (not squared as the Assyrian's) distinguishes the conquered people, very often; and in other cases close black curls without a vestige of plaiting, equally mark the Jew. He was not to wear a garment of woollen and linen together (Deut. xxii. 11), and was to make fringes upon the four quarters of his vesture, and to put upon the fringe a riband of blue. The Lord in ordering this costume throughout their generations, said, "It shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them;"* and the settlement of this mode of apparel it appears was intended to hinder them from seeking perpetual variety, and going "after their own heart and their own eyes." (Num. xv. 39.)

The Hebrews did not at all abhor the society of idolaters; they liked it, and practised their ways.

* M. Botta repeatedly notices at Khorsabad the inscriptions on the bottom of the dresses of the Hebrew prisoners in the cuneiform character.

Digitized by Google

"I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves," says Moses, "and turn aside from the way, and evil will befall you in the latter days." (Deut. xxxi. 29.)

There is something very definite said about the dress of Christian *women* by the Apostle Peter, and by Timothy the beloved of St. Paul—what it *is* to be, and what it *is not* to be. They are to "adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety," which certainly would not designate the apologies for bonnets of the present fashion, which seem to be specially arranged for *display* of "braided hair and gold (or its counterfeit) and pearls, and costly array of tinkling ornaments," and "head bands," and round tires like the moon, exactly similar to Isaiah's picture (see chap. iii. 16), which "the Lord would take away."

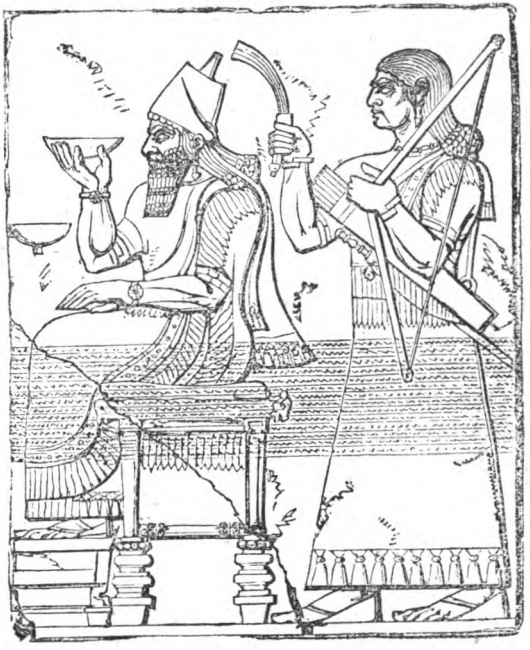
The Christian women and the Christian workers in our congregations ought surely to set their faces against these increasing vanities, and have a modest style of their own, which would be far more becoming and far more consistent for those who are "zealous of good works."

We have to come again to the lesson in the New Testament of old times, and not to be ashamed of that separateness from the world which God has appointed for the sons and daughters of Zion. It is not for them to imitate the "woman arrayed in purple and scarlet, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations" (Rev. xvii.), and even She does not so array the women She sets apart for the service of her Church.

Here is a warlike king of ancient Nineveh, seated on his throne. A eunuch stands behind him, with bow and quiver, and in one hand holds a fly-flapper over the royal head. The king is seated,

Digitized by Google

and has a cup in his hand, from which he is supposed to be divining—therefore a "cup of abomination to the Lord. The throne on which he sits is orna-



KING OF THE NORTH-WEST PALACE.

mented with rams' heads. In the glass case opposite this sculpture, in the Nimroud side gallery, may still be observed, as found by Mr. Layard among the earth and rubbish in this palace, *the throne itself* re-constructed from many fragments, "earth's oldest throne," or one of its oldest, for the sculptures on these slabs portray, as must be allowed, an age or ages previous to their own. *These were evidently not the first sculptures*, though the first in our possession. All this magnificence in dress, the fringes and the tassels, the bracelets,

Digitized by Google

and the plaiting of the hair and beard, and the royal state, and the trapping of the horses, imply great luxury and civilization, as regards the ornamental arts. The early Ninevites and Babylonians, bent on carrying away captive other nations, had paid much and long attention to their own adornment. They were no rude savages, though they were cruel conquerors in the times of Israel's Judges. They had spent their minds upon the flesh and all its luxuries.

The early Assyrians clothed their horses in embroidered housings, and decorated them with plumes, tassels, and chains. And in the twelfth century B.C. the kings of Midian slain by Gideon are spoken of as having prple raiment, besides collars, or sweet jewels (see margin, Judges viii. 21 and 26), and chains and ornaments like the moon on their camels' necks. Ezekiel says (ch. xxvii. 20) that "Dedan was the merchant of Tyre in precious clothes for chariots," in the after history of the kingdom.

THE ASSYRIAN CHARIOTS.

Much is said about chariots in the Bible, and these in the Nineveh sculptures are evidently the chariots intended. The Canaanites of Palestine were able to resist the Israelites so successfully (unless Divine power drove them out) because of their chariots of iron. Jabin, King of Canaan, had 900 chariots. (Judges iv. 3.)

The prophets frequently allude to chariots as typical of power. King David says (Ps. xx. 7) :—

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God."

These are the war-chariots carrying archers, just as

Digitized by Google

spoken of in our Scriptures (Isa. v. 28), "raging in battle." "Rage ye chariots!" (Jer. xlvi. 9.) The prophet Nahum speaks of Nineveh in Sennacherib's latter day as—

"A city of blood, all full of lies and robbery; . . . and of the noise of the rattling of wheels and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots." (Nahum iii. 1, 2.)

And God says (by Nahum ii. 13), that He

"Will burn her chariots in the smoke."

As He most assuredly did in thousands, while He left to us these few stone likenesses of them. You see it is necessary to study the Book of Judges before you can understand the value of the relics in our Nineveh galleries.

The figure of a king of Nineveh stands as a frontispiece to this tract, and marks the early rise in Scripture history of the *first* of the prophet Daniel's heathen kingdoms called "beasts," and defined as Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome; for the first of these had now begun to arise in conjunction with Israel. You see the king has in his hand a sceptre or rod.

The King of Babylon is called by the Lord "His hammer," and the Assyrian His "rod" (Isa. x. 5). God has many figures for the Assyrians: the "cedar in Lebanon," whose root was by great waters; there was not "any tree in the garden of God like unto him in his beauty;" all the trees of Eden envied him." (See Ezek. xxxi. 8, 9.) Then we read that his branches are fallen, his boughs are broken, and—

"All the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him." (Verse 12.)

If Israel, as a literal people, foreshadow God's

Digitized by Google

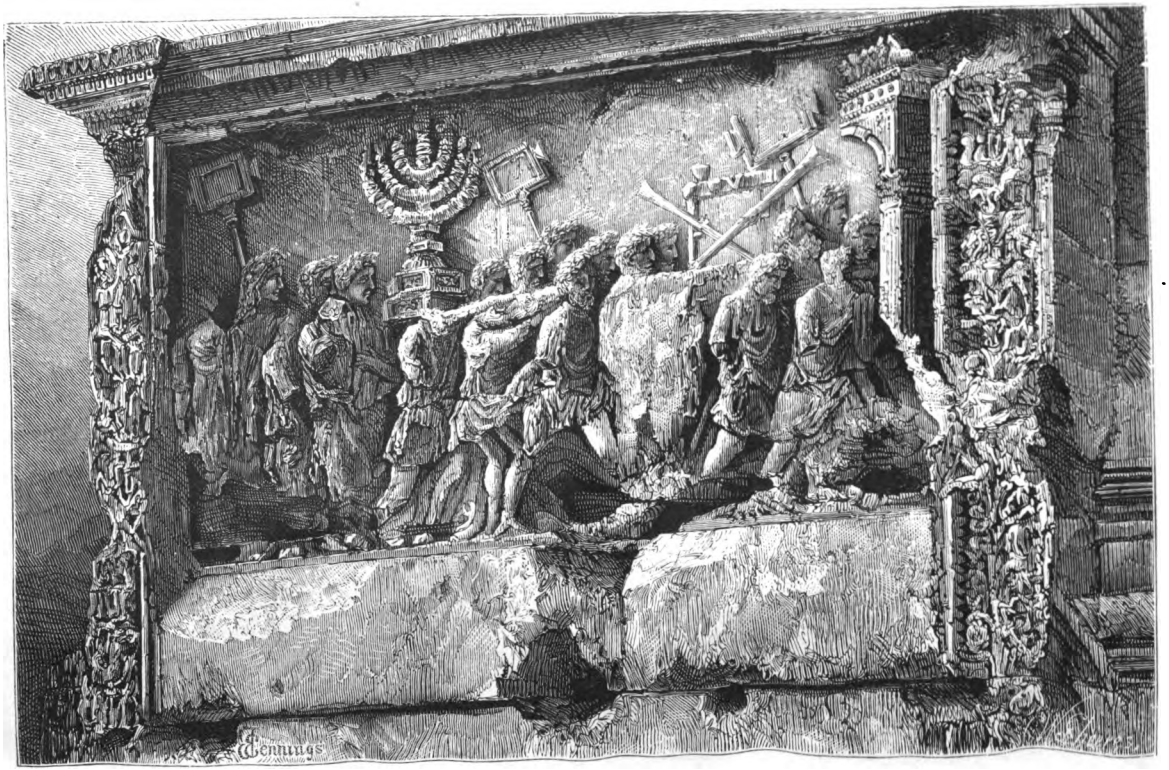
spiritual Israel, Babylon and Nineveh foreshadow the world-power which has always been in array against the Church of God. So with the other armies of the heathen. The league of Jabin, the King of Hazor, was like the marshalling of anti-Christian forces against the early Church in an after day. The horses and the chariots were signs of power and strength; the very much people as the sand of the sea-shore," were like the furious myriads who with clamorous outcries against Christ and His Church, made themselves heard in Rome in the words, "The Christians to the lions." The Book of Revelation tells us that this struggle will be more fierce than ever in the latter day.

"The power of this world," says the writer whose motto we have taken for this tract, "and its wisdom will again muster their forces against Jesus Christ and His people. There will be a godless rebellion of human intelligence against Divine Revelation." Some sounds of the conflict are already heard. The dust of the legions of Antichrist is already rising in the air. Spiritual Jabins are coming forth from the Hazors of their strength, and march at the head of an innumerable multitude against a Divine Joshua; but He will conquer, as of old time. In the old and ruined Colosseum of Rome the white cross still stands as a Christian trophy. After the final conflict is over, there shall be peace upon Israel.

It is thought by many that the Book of Judges was written by the prophet Samuel; but, whoever was the historian, his courage and truth are seen in the unflinching way in which he exposes the sins of the Hebrews, and declares their frequent ingratitude for the amazing love of God.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



THE ARCH OF TITUS AT ROME.

Digitized by Google

"SAMUEL THE PROPHET."

No. XIII.

SAMUEL, "the asked or heard of God," was his mother's name for the temple child, who afterwards became the last of the JUDGES, the first of the regular succession of PROPHETS,* and the founder of the Hebrew monarchy.

No character so great had arisen in Israel since the days of Moses, and God Himself by the mouth of Jeremiah links them together. (Jer. xv. 1.)

"Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be towards this people. Cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth."

You would perhaps naturally suppose that Samuel wrote the books of the Old Testament that are called by his name. They formed one original book or roll, and were not divided into two, in the manuscript copies of the Hebrew Scriptures; but in the Greek Septuagint or first *translation* of the holy books, they are called the first and second "books of the kingdom." The Hebrews considered they had three rather than six books of the history of the kings of Israel and Judah, but they were each afterwards divided for convenience into 1st and 2nd Samuel; 1st and 2nd of Kings; and 1st and 2nd of Chronicles.

The first twenty-four chapters of the first book of Samuel *may* probably have been written by Samuel

* "All the prophets," says Peter, Acts iii. 24, "from Samuel and those that follow after."

Digitized by Google

himself, and the rest by the prophets Gad and Nathan, who continued the history of their own times, but whose names are not given to any books of Scripture now thus known, as it seems they once were, for in 1 Chron. xxix. 29, it is said that—

"The acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer."

The *Hebrew* word here used for "*seer*," signifying "*one who sees*," is used but ten times in the Bible, and in seven of these it is applied to Samuel. There is a time when he first rises to our recollection as the little child in the linen ephod, and in the little mantle his mother brought him—as the child Samuel sleeping in the tabernacle at Shiloh, to whom the Lord "*revealed* Himself." That expression literally means, "The Lord uncovered his ear," as if the person who confides a secret should move away the long hair of his friend to whisper what none else may hear;" and this inner voice of God gave miraculous insight into the secrets of heaven and the future. Samuel was called of God to be the first of that long line of prophets, whose lives and sayings run *side by side* with the Jewish monarchy from the first to the last king, Samuel being the first, and Malachi the last of the line.

The prophets were messengers sent of God, whom He inspired to declare His will to the one chosen nation of Israel, and they foretold events long before they came to pass. Enoch, Noah, Jacob and Moses, had delivered many prophecies, which are included in their individual histories.

The inspiration that came upon the prophets was a wonderful thing; the men to whom it was vouchsafed felt it to be a power that they could not withstand. It took possession of them, filled them,

Digitized by Google

excited them, bore them along, enabled them to speak words which they could not have uttered at any other time. "The Spirit of God," it is said, was upon them, and their spirits felt like a vessel impelled before the wind. This was the inspiration vouchsafed to the higher class of prophets, as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and *also* to those who in Scripture are called the *minor* or *lesser* prophets, because the prophecies they uttered were *short*, though as important. The Scribes wrote all these shorter prophecies together on one roll, lest any of them should be lost.

This inspiration from on high was not denied to women, who seem to have accompanied it with music and song. Let us listen to Hannah chanting in the tabernacle of Shiloh. Hannah ("the mother of Samuel," as women are still spoken of in the East) sings a *Gospel* song, inspired by the spirit of prophecy in the times of the Levitical law. (1 Sam. ii. 1—10.) You should read by its side the song of Sarah on the birth of Isaac (Gen. xxi. 6, 7), and the *Magnificat* of the Virgin Mary, as the mother of Christ (Luke i. 46). There had been a song of Miriam, "the prophetess," after passing the Red Sea (Exodus xv. 20), and a song of Deborah, the prophetess, praising the Lord for His deliverance by women, and it was given to women to sing all these songs, which foreshadowed the victories of the promised seed of the woman.

Some have thought that Hannah's song is too grand for the birth of Samuel, but the grandeur of *sacred* poetry consists in that it often merges the individual in the nation; it is an utterance of the Holy Ghost, and looks forward to all mankind. Hannah's song has been called a link between the song of Moses (Deut. xxxii.) and the song of David (2 Sam. xxii).

Digitized by Google

The ancient Hebrew Church considered Hannah's song a prophecy of Christ. She is the first person in Scripture who uses the words "His anointed," or who invokes Jehovah as the "Lord of hosts." David, God's chosen king, was to be anointed by her son Samuel, but before that, her son would also see God's own ark, the symbol of His Presence, which had led Israel to victory for 400 years, taken captive by the Philistines, and transported from Shiloh to Ashdod, to be placed in the temple of Dagon. Yet this was only to shew that before Him Dagon must fall prostrate, and that He would cause the Philistines themselves to return it to Israel; but when they did so Shiloh was pillaged and its sanctity had passed away, for the tabernacle—the last relic of the wilderness life—was gone, and the institution of the priesthood lay desolate; the predictions were fulfilled which God had caused the child-prophet to utter to Eli, and had been so manifestly fulfilled "that all Israel knew, from Dan to Beersheba, from north to south, that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." (1 Sam. iv. 20.) This account of him may perhaps be an addition by one of the after Scribes.

In the Old Testament there are clear, strong, vivid, examples given, of the character of king, priest, and prophet. Samuel obeyed the call of God to act in both the latter capacities, and he anointed kings. The prophet was not an antagonist to the priest, but he was often raised up to supply the lack of service in the priesthood. The prophet directed the actions of the king, and warned him from his wanderings in times of national confusion and error; and prophet, priest and king, each imperfectly foreshadowed Christ, who in Himself alone, perfectly united the three offices thus dimly outlined a thousand years before.

Digitized by Google

In all God's government arranged for Israel, everything stood on the base of their religion, their duty towards Himself. Their ruler was GOD, and all their magistrates, judges, kings and prophets, were HIS ministers. We have seen them come up out of Egypt, scarcely then to be called a nation, but a body of tribes, each tribe having its princes and its heads; and these still subsisted in the Promised Land. God and His TABERNACLE were the centre of all their history, whether in the time of "Moses, His servant," or of Joshua, Moses's minister, or of the Judges who followed Joshua. The Tabernacle was the place where man met with God. When pitched at Shiloh, the site which HE had chosen for it (Joshua ix. 22; xviii. 1) in the centre of the land, it continued to be the gathering point of the heads of the tribes, during the whole period of the judges, for councils of peace or war (see Joshua xxii., Judges xxi.), and for annual solemn dances, in which the women of Shiloh were conspicuous. Afterwards corruption crept into these mixed assemblies, and the tabernacle of the congregation was profaned by its own priesthood; a divided worship was paid at other altars, and ere long the ark of God was taken by the Philistines, and upon the very sanctuary was written,

"Ichabod"—"The glory hath departed." (1 Sam. iv. 22.)

"For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men." (Psalm lxxvii.)

After this the Tabernacle did not perish, but it never recovered its glory. Even Samuel, who had been brought up within its precints, treats it as an

Digitized by Google

abandoned shrine, and sacrifices to the Lord elsewhere. He sacrifices, though only a Levite and not a priest, at Mizpeh, (1 Sam. vii. 9), at Ramah, (ix. 12), at Gilgal, (x. 8.) The tabernacle probably became again a moveable sanctuary, for under King Saul it seems for a while to have been settled at Nob. (1 Sam. xxi. 1—5.) Here the priests were massacred, and hence Abiathar the high priest fled; and the oracle of God by the ephod—the answer by Urim and Thummim, was known no more after Abiathar's time. He answered David by the ephod once in this way, after his flight from Nob (1 Sam. xxiii. 9), probably also again in 2 Samuel xxi. 1, but now the word of the Lord was to be uttered by the voice of the Prophets, instead of the Urim and Thummim.

Do you want to know what was meant by these words? No one now can *certainly* tell, but their literal sense is "Lights" and "Perfections," and the Jews must have been aware what they meant up to the time of Solomon. By Exod. xxviii. 15—30, we learn that the Urim and Thummim were placed *within* the breastplate of judgment worn by the high priest, which, with wreathen chains of gold, was attached to the shoulder-pieces of his ephod.

The breastplate was of cunning work, gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, mingled with fine twined linen in its "foursquare" construction, and upon this groundwork of gorgeous colour were "filled in" glittering jewels, in four rows—ruby, topaz, and carbuncle; emerald, sapphire, and diamond; opal, agate, and amethyst; beryl, onyx, and jasper; each gem set in ouches or clasps of gold, and graven with the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. There is especial mention made of the *inner* side of

Digitized by Google

the breastplate, and on this inner side were to be placed the Urim and the Thummim.

The breastplate passed from Aaron to Eleazar and his son, and the Urim and Thummim with it.

Moses mentions them as the crowning glory of the tribe of Levi (Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9). Such inquiries as the following seem to have been made of the Lord, and answered doubtless by these means, always in conjunction with a priest and an ephod. According to the Urim the children of Israel were to go out or come in. (Num. xxvii. 21.)

"Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first?" (Judges i. 1.)

"Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin?" (Judges xx. 18.)

"Shall I go and smite those Philistines?" (1 Sam. xxiii. 2.)

"Will the men of Keilah deliver me into the hand of Saul?" (1 Sam. xxiii. 12.)

The answer is in all cases very brief, and amounts to little more than an affirmative, or a negative, and one question only is answered at a time.

Never after the days of David is the ephod with its precious breast-plate connected with counsel from Jehovah.

The nation on their return from the captivity desired a priest with the Urim and the Thummim, but he was no more found. No relic of the ark or its golden cherubim remain, and none from Solomon's Temple were preserved to tempt Christ's followers to idolatry. If they had been, in these days of fresh reverence for the external and the sensuous, who can tell but they might have been worshipped like the crucifix of Rome?

It seems most probable that the light from the Urim and the Thummim within the breast-plate (whatever they were) shone visibly to those without

Digitized by Google

through the precious stones, which were probably *set clear*—so the light and love of Jesus in the heart will be evident, especially to brethren in Christ, the "household of faith," who know for themselves the Divine source of such illumination.

But to return from the ephod to the tabernacle.

All things in the Tabernacle had spoken of Christ—in symbol—in symbol to Israel—in vivid types to *us*, for we can look back upon the Old Testament by the light of the New. A symbol was a sign, which might refer to past, present, or future; a type was always prefigurative. God ordered symbolic actions in the prophets. Jeremiah's breaking a potter's vessel (Jer. xviii. 2, 10), and his hiding a girdle in a rock on the banks of the Euphrates, which when looked for proved to be rotten, signified destruction shortly to befall the abandoned Jewish people (Jer. xiii. 1—7). The building of the temple was a symbolic prophecy prefiguring the incarnation of God in the person of Christ, and of the raising up in Him of a spiritual house that should be an "habitation of God through the Spirit." (Ephes. ii. 20—22.)

The old Tabernacle of the wilderness is spoken of in the first book of Samuel, as the "house," or the "temple" of Jehovah, and, indeed, the Temple of Solomon was neither more nor less than the exact repetition of the pattern "which God showed to Moses in the mount," only it was erected of more durable materials, and was just double the size of the holy tent in the wilderness; therefore a knowledge of the meaning of the symbols in the one structure is necessary to understand the other.

The outer court of the tabernacle was formed by pillars of brass, with capitals of silver, five cubits or seven feet seven inches high, and the same distance

Digitized by Google

apart, to which were attached, by hooks of silver, white curtains, it is supposed of network, so as to permit the tribes around to witness the proceedings within. These curtains enclosed a space which was a double square twenty-five yards broad and fifty yards long. The entrance on the eastern side was fifty cubits or twelve and a half yards wide, through curtains wrought with needlework of gorgeous colours, blue, purple and scarlet, on a white ground—all which also spake in symbol to the Israelite. The *white* was to cause him to think of God's holiness and purity fencing and surrounding His house; the *blue* lifted his eyes to the sapphire sky, God's throne; and the blue riband prescribed for the hem of his own garment reminded him that he was God's servant while upon earth; the *purple* was the colour of kings, and spoke to him of the presence of a Royal Master; while the *scarlet* (blood-colour) told him that *that* holy and heavenly and royal Presence could only be approached by an offering of the shed blood—the blood of the Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world."

The lamb which was to be offered as a burnt-offering for the sins of the people, every morning and every evening, on the brazen altar, was the first object that struck the eye on entering the outer court of the Tabernacle. On this altar was always burning the fire which had been kindled by a flash from the Schechinah, or Presence within the Vail; it "came out from before the Lord" (Levit. ix. 24), and this fire was never to go out. This altar spoke to the Hebrews of pardon for sin through perpetual sacrifice.

The second object in the outer court was the laver of brass, at which the priests were to wash their hands and their feet. The altar was the place of

Digitized by Google

pardon and justification through the blood of Christ, the laver of purification was the sign of sanctification through the Spirit.

Then, on entering the Tabernacle itself, which only the priests might do, there were again symbols of the same things. The little table of shewbread, with twelve loaves upon it, one for each tribe, to be renewed every seventh day, and a double one on the Sabbath, prefigured the Saviour who declared that He was the bread of life, which bread He broke for His disciples in symbol of His body broken on the accursed tree. The place of worship was to be the place of spiritual food and light, and communion with God, as it should be to this day.

The interior of the Tabernacle was dark, but for the light of the seven-branched golden candlestick, signifying the illumination of the Holy Ghost. The form of this sacred candlestick is preserved to us to this day on the arch of Titus, the Roman conqueror, who destroyed Jerusalem for the last time seventy years after Christ, and sculptured the trophies of its holy things on the triumphal arch which was to endure to *his* pagan glory *even to this present day.* You have in the frontispiece a fine wood-cut, made from a noble photograph of this treasure of treasures among the relics of antiquity.

Rome shows on this tablet that in the first Christian century she held in pawn, as it were, the holy things of God, as a heathen power. Where she hid the originals none can tell. The precious candlestick revealed not to *her* the glorious meaning of the table of shewbread, or of the golden altar of incense, ascending before the vail of the Temple, and which signified the place of communion with the unseen and invisible. We might think that the Book of Leviticus contained nothing for *us*, till the Book of

Digitized by Google

Hebrews points us back to the consideration of all these symbols, or figures, and what they signify. See the whole *ninth* and *tenth* chapters of Hebrews, and then turn to the sixteenth of Leviticus, and watch the offering of the Scapegoat.

Two goats are taken by the priest, both alike in age and beauty, and lots are cast upon them. One is sacrificed; upon the other Aaron lays his hands, and makes over it a confession of the sins of the people, and then sends it far into the wilderness. Christ is typified by both these goats. They signify two acts of Christ. I. His sacrifice of Himself for the sins of the people. II. His bearing away our sin into a land not inhabited by us, even into heaven, whither He ascended, and is looked upon by God as bearing our sin. The Hebrew name for the scape-goat is Azazel, which means "the bearer off, the carrier away." The whole figure represents not only the dying of Christ for our sins, but His rising again: "He rose again for our justification." A single goat could not have represented both ideas; the disappearance of the goat is the type of the blotting-out of our sins, which God will remember no more. When He forgives He forgets. *We* cannot do this. We sometimes forgive, and yet remember; but God blots out, and for ever.

Aaron was to take the blood of the first goat that he killed, before the dismissal of the second, and bring it within the vail, and sprinkle it on the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat, and also upon the horns of the brazen altar. There was to be no man in the Tabernacle while he did it; but the Awful Presence of the Lord would be there; and he was to take a censer full of burning coals from off the golden altar of incense before the Lord, and to sprinkle the incense on the fire, that the cloud of

Digitized by Google

the incense might rise up and cover the mercy-seat of the ark of the testimony, as it is said, "that he die not." He waved the censer that the clouds of incense might be as a vail before that exceeding brightness, which would otherwise glare him into blindness, and then he sprinkled the blood on the mercy-seat, and *seven* times on the floor—and when God saw the blood, as in Egypt, He passed over the sin of priest and people.

This was done on the great Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventeenth sacred month, Tisri, between the Feast of Trumpets and of Tabernacles.

The Commands of Leviticus, you will remember, were delivered at Sinai in the beginning of the second year of the wanderings, when it was supposable that the Israelites would be obedient, and march directly for Canaan; but they rebelled at Kadesh Barnea, and were condemned to wander for thirty-eight years in the wilderness. For all these years they were under a ban—out of favour with God—and that generation all died in the wilderness. They could not even fulfil the requirements of the Levitical law. It was not intended for a rebel people in the desert, but for an obedient people in Canaan. When they passed into the land with Joshua, the Levitical law awoke with the resurrection of the people, and to the devout Israelite must have suggested many meanings beneath the surface of its letter. But it has been well observed "that the hieroglyphics of the Levitical law could never have been fully intelligible till the Holy Spirit deciphered them. In the first days of the Gospel the literal requirements of the Law were fulfilled and done away with in Christ. They fell off like the husks of swelling seed, or the blossoms of

Digitized by Google

setting fruit; but their spiritual meaning is still fruitful for ever."

But to return to Samuel. He was an intercessor with God.

"Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and he answered them."

This is the way that King David remembers Samuel, in the ninety-ninth Psalm, and Samuel himself says to the people, "God forbid that I should sin in ceasing to pray for you." (1 Sam. xii. 23.)

We must now look for the scope and general meaning of the First Book of Samuel, so called. At the end of the first twenty-four chapters, which chiefly consist of biographies of Samuel, Saul, and David, the twenty-fifth chapter begins with the announcement:—

"And Samuel died, and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah."

The main design of the first book seems to be to continue the history of the Israelites under the last two judges, Eli and Samuel, and then to introduce the choice of the people in King Saul, and to show the cause why the form of government was changed into a monarchy.

Before Moses bade farewell to the Hebrews in the wilderness, he had foreseen that they would desire a king at some future day, and had thus provided that he should be an enlightened king.

When he sat upon his throne, he was to write him a copy of the law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites. He was to do this for himself, and he was to read in it all the days of

Digitized by Google

his life (Deut. xvii. 18, 19), which many proofs in the Psalms assure us that David continually did.

The life of David occupies *sixteen* chapters of the First Book of Samuel, beginning at the sixteenth chapter, and the whole *twenty-four* chapters of the second Book, besides *two* chapters of the first of Kings, and *nineteen* chapters of the first of Chronicles. If Samuel was his biographer up to the twenty-fourth chapter of this first book, and the time of his own death, his part of the story chiefly dealt with David's early prowess, and his wanderings and sufferings under the jealousy of Saul.

After reading his conquest of Goliath, in chapter the seventeenth, let us turn to Psalm ix., where he praises God for his triumph, and after the story of Jonathan's advising him to flee from his cruel father, Psalm xi., where David confides in God. In Psalm lvi,, he complains of his persecutors; in Psalm lix., he prays for deliverance; Psalm cxlii. is his prayer in the cave of Adullam.

In 1 Samuel xxii. there is an account of Doeg's treachery; and the Doeg Psalms, as they are called, depicting David's state of mind in those circumstances, are the 17th, 35th, 52nd, 64th, 109th, 120th, and 140th Psalms, and we may then follow him into the wilderness of Ziph, in the 23rd chapter of 1 Samuel, and in his own Psalms, 31st, 57th, 58th, and 63rd. Both of the books of Samuel are very important to the illustration of the Book of Psalms.

The First Book of Samuel begins and winds up the story of SAUL, of whom it has been said that *he* was "but a parenthesis in the counsel of God concerning Israel," like the Levitical law "added because of transgression." His beginnings were fair as long as he was little in his own eyes, but he soon

Digitized by Google

grew self-confident and vain-glorious. He fell away from being *God's* king as early as the second year of his reign, and the gift of the Spirit to him for that office was taken away and bestowed upon David. Saul had trifled with God's Word, and followed the law of his own will, and more of his life passed in pursuing after David, the Lord's servant, than in driving out the enemies of Israel. He was puffed up and rejected, and then deserted, and given up to the guidance of an evil spirit, and to envy and hatred of David, and even of Jonathan his son, so far nobler than himself.

A prey to desolation and despair, he resorted to Samuel when dead, to whom he would not listen while living, and thus filled up his cup of abomination with necromancy, which is in the sight of God so hateful. (Deut. xviii. 11.)

Saul's consultation with the witch of Endor opens a solemn question? Was this really the departed spirit of Samuel returned to the earth, or a Satanic spirit in his form? It is quite possible with God, for demons to appear to men by His permission, but it would be inconsistent with the style of Scripture that the Holy Spirit should use the name of Samuel throughout the story, while, at the same time, Satan was intended; and Dr. Hales says that the Hebrew words are *Samuel himself*, the latter word being omitted in the English.

Many students of Scripture are of opinion that God *really* permitted the spirit of Samuel to appear to the terror and surprise of the woman, and for the last warning of the wilful Saul. Yet we cannot for a moment suppose that Satan, or a witch, or any who hold forbidden intercourse with evil spirits, have any power over the spirits of the just made perfect, so as to cause them to leave their heavenly

Digitized by Google

rest to answer the questions of men upon earth. This was a solitary case in which God permitted such intercourse. Dr. Hales suggests that it may have been for three reasons:—I. To make this, Saul's last crime, the instrument of his punishment in the foretaste of his impending doom. II. To show to the heathen world that God could set His prophets even above the powers of darkness to their own terror. III. To confirm the belief in a future state by "one who rose from the dead," under the dispensation of Moses. How awful was the message conveyed, and how true. The next day followed Gilboa's slaughter of both father and son. David thus generously laments over his enemy, and his dear and noble friend Jonathan:—

"The beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places.
How are the mighty fallen!
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided.
They were swifter than eagles;
They were stronger than lions.
How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!"

DAVID.

David reigned in Hebron seven and a half years. King, but at first, only over Judah, his power gradually increased, and at last the voice of the whole people called him to occupy the throne. His twenty-seventh Psalm, "The Lord is my light and my salvation," the Psalm "before the anointing," shows on whose arm he leaned in his rise from the sheepfold to the crown of all Israel, which he held for thirty-three years.

The second Book of Samuel details the reformation of the Jewish Church as established by David, records his many royal triumphs, then his sins

Digitized by Google

and his troubles, and finally, his restoration; and it is a most delightful task to follow out his history with his own poetic and inspired records in the Psalms. He is called the sweet Psalmist of Israel, and he tells us that the Spirit of the Lord spake by him. (2 Sam. xxiii. 1.)

It was doubtless by Divine authority that he appointed the singing of his Psalms by chosen and skilful persons in the solemn worship of the Tabernacle, which Solomon continued in the Temple, and which was re-established by Ezra after the Captivity. Thus the people became acquainted with the "songs of Zion," and were celebrated in surrounding countries for their melodious voices. Babylon required of them a song in her strange land.

There has been a wonderful communion of saints in the Psalms of David for 3,000 years. It is well to know to which to turn on particular occasions.

There are penitential Psalms.
vi., xxii., xxxviii., li., cii., cxxx.,
Psalms of dejection under afflictions.
xiii., lxxvii., lxxxviii., cxliii.
Psalms in which help is asked of God.
vii., xvii., xxvi., xxxv., lvi.
Psalms expressive of firm trust in God under affliction.
iii., xvi., xxvii. xxx., liv., lvii., lxi., lxii., lxxi.
Thanksgiving Psalms.
ix., xviii., xxx., xxxiv., xl., xlviii.
Prophetic Psalms.
xi., xvi., xxii., xl., xlv., lxviii., lxxii., lxxxvii., cxviii.
Historical Psalms.
lxxviii., cv., cvi.
Messianic Psalms.
ii., xxii., xlv., cx., cxviii.

You will find titles to many of the Psalms, which point you at once to the occasion on which they were written. "They contain the Hebrew history

Digitized by Google

set to music." Fifty of them are anonymous, and of the hundred that remain, Moses is the author of *one*—the 90th; King David of 73; King Solomon of two (Ps. lxxii., cxxvii.); Asaph of 12; the sons of Korah of 11; and Ethan of one (Ps. lxxxix.); all which were arranged in one volume or roll by Ezra the Scribe.

No fewer than ten of the Psalms,* either in *their* traditional titles or internal evidence, bear marks *of* having been composed for the high festival *of the* ark going up to Jerusalem, in the musical glories *of* which the poet-king, playing on stringed instruments, also personally shared.

The erection of Jerusalem into the new capital introduces us to a new era in David's life. He now became a king, on the scale of the great oriental sovereigns of Egypt and Assyria. "I have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the world," says the Lord, by Nathan the prophet. Within ten years from the capture of Jerusalem he had reduced to a state of permanent subjection the Philistines on the west, the Moabites on the east, the Syrians on the north-east, as far as the Euphrates, the Edomites on the south, and finally the Ammonites; and a general peace then followed, commemorated in the name of the peaceful Solomon, the son born to him at this crisis.

King David was a man of war; the Scripture outlines his character: "The son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, cunning in playing, a mighty valiant man, a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him." (1 Sam. xvi. 18.) This portrait formed his intro-

* xxix., xxx., xv., xlvi., ci., lxviii., xxiv., cxxxii., while parts of Psalm cv. and cvi. are given in 1 Chron. xvi., in the historical account of the heartfelt ceremony.

Digitized by Google

duction to the court of Saul. The Lord placed him at that point in the Hebrew history when the heathen nations were yet to be overcome, and many of David's psalms show the spirit in which he overcame them.

He was the man for his time. *So far from faultless* that we now derive our chief instruction, not from the history of his conquests and his splendour, but from his humble penitence after his recorded crimes. His passion and his tenderness, his generosity and his fierceness, stand out in bold light and shadow in the history of the world. Yet the Lord chose him and his. Even Christ is far less often called the son of Abraham, than the "Son of David." Most of David's sins, and the sorrows that grew out of them, sprang from the polygamy, with all its evil consequences, into which he had plunged on coming to the throne, thus forsaking the law for the king, so wisely given by Moses. But one thing he had always on his heart, to entreat the presence of the Lord in his city and his kingdom. In a day when he had assembled all the princes and captains of Israel—

"Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said Hear me, my brethren, and my people: As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building.

"But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.

"Howbeit the Lord God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever.

"And of all my sons (for the Lord hath given me many sons), he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel.

"And He said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts; for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his Father."

Among all the Psalms there is none that proves

Digitized by Google

how David loved and studied the Word of God so much as his longest psalm, the 119th—*the Bible Psalm*—in which every one of the 176 verses speaks with love and joy of this precious word.

Have you noticed that every verse, under the different names of testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, ordinances, judgments, law, refers to the Bible?—and David's Bible comprised only the five books of Moses, Job, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, and the history of Israel by Samuel, to which he added so largely of his own psalms.

The whole Christian world, as well as the *Jews*, may thank God for their poet-king, with all his short comings and sins. It was seen in David as the German hymn says—that

> "The more the cross, the more the praying,
> The bruised plant yields sweetest balm;
> Man doth not seek to find the pole
> In quiet seas and steady calms,
> And how had *we* had David's psalms
> Had *he* not had a troubled soul?"

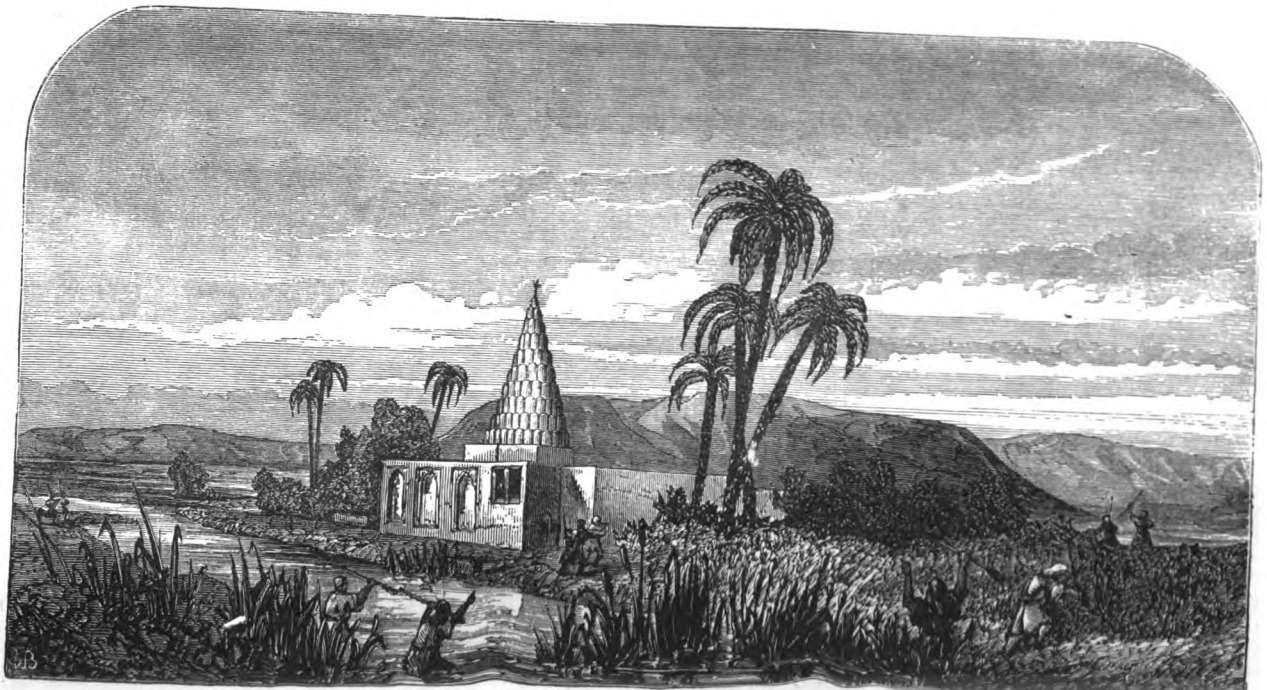
So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. He lives in his undying and inspired songs, most precious in their prophecies of the kingdom of Christ; and to this day he makes himself a place in every Christian heart, a place nearest and dearest in our darkest hours of sorrow and tribulation.

The Psalms are quoted about seventy times in the NEW Testament. The Spirit of Christ had spoken in David; and He Himself explained to His disciples the meaning of what had been spoken of Him in the Psalms. (See Luke xxiv. 44, 45.)

"These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you; that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



TOMB OF DANIEL AT SUBA.

Digitized by Google

THE TIMES OF THE KINGS AND THE PROPHETS.

No. XIV.

We are come now to the books of Kings and Chronicles, and we cannot fail to see how *they* belong to the books of Samuel, which come before them, for the first and second chapters of Kings are needed to close the life and reign of David; nineteen chapters too of the first book of Chronicles, are taken up by David's story, *told over again* in the aforesaid annals of his nation.

David's life, indeed, takes up no less than sixty-one chapters of the three different books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. His son Solomon's life, with all his "glory," is allowed much shorter space, it only occupies twenty chapters, viz., the *first eleven* of 1st Kings, and the *first nine* of 2nd Chronicles.

The first book of Chronicles is filled by genealogies, and by the life of David. The other sixty-three chapters of the first and second of Kings, and of the second book of Chronicles, comprise the history of the *divided* kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

Of Judah there are twenty kings, and of Israel nineteen kings, and their reigns include the times of *all* the Prophets whose names are given to books of the Bible; so that the books of Kings and Chronicles, with the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, which follow them, present the great

Digitized by Google

platform of Jewish history (occupying about 530 years), on which all the Prophets moved and spake, although their books seem to *come* after the Kings in the Bible.

We shall offer you a Table, which will make this clear to you, and then take up each Prophet in his turn, and consider his times, but you cannot at all understand the Prophets unless you remember the king and his times under whom each lived, and how these kings succeeded each other.

It is astonishing how those who have received Christ, and love the NEW Testament, should *think* it of so little consequence to climb the ladder of the OLD Testament history which led up to *Him*. Every child brought up in a Christian family, or taught in a Christian school, ought to be able to count the "rounds" of that ladder as easily as they can say their alphabet, yet how very few of us are thus able. If our young people, even in the educated classes, had been thus informed, and had daily studied the histories inspired by the Spirit of God, with half the zest to which they can turn to those of heathen nations called "beasts," in the prophet Daniel (but which we call "classics," and make the foundation of our modern literature); if they were as versed in Bible lore as they are in Greek and Latin (the languages of old Greece and Rome), they would perhaps have had better morals in these days, and would have been harassed by fewer doubts. The school of Colenso is best fitted for those who are ignorant of Scripture *in its connection*, and who are not "well furnished" to meet its clever but baseless cavils at the *Story* which God Himself has vouchsafed to tell to man.

We have tried to trace this story step by step; we have seen how Genesis prepared the way for

Digitized by Google

Exodus, Exodus for Leviticus, Leviticus for Numbers, Numbers for Deuteronomy. Then these five books of Moses were necessary for the understanding of Joshua, Joshua for Judges and Ruth, Judges and Ruth for the Books of Samuel, which begins the history of the kings and the prophets, and describe the occasions of many of David's Psalms. We have now in the first book of Kings to observe how the reign of David flows into that of Solomon, and how distinctly, though of course in a human and earthly manner, they each prefigured Christ. David, as the conqueror of Jerusalem, and purchaser of the site of the Temple, and provider of treasures for it; Solomon, who is called the Prince of Peace, the wise Judge and King, the builder of the Temple—each after all is but a faint shadow of the King of kings, and Lord of lords, "the Lord of hosts," and the "Prince of peace;" He who had prepared for the building of His spiritual temple in the beginning by the lives and utterances of patriarchs and prophets, and has carried it on even through all their mistakes and sins, and those of priests and kings; and who has completed the work by evangelists and apostles, whom He filled with the Spirit sent down from heaven, they also not being perfect, but made perfect in Christ Jesus.

To these it was given to prepare for us the records which they were inspired to write; and still, ever since, has the same Heavenly King been polishing the corner-stones for His palace above, "making them ready in many a quarry before they are brought thither," as Solomon did the stones of *his* temple (1 Kings vi. 7), "so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house of the Lord while it was building."

Digitized by Google

Every living stone in God's spiritual temple has been, and will be to the end of all Church history, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

But now let us fix our thoughts on the life of Solomon as recorded in the books of Kings and Chronicles. His acts seem to have been formerly contained in "books" referred to as those of Nathan the prophet and Iddo the seer (see 2 Chron. ix. 29); and a "Book of the Acts of Solomon," spoken of in 1 Kings xi. 41, may have supplied many details which have come down to us in the summing-up of the Books of Chronicles, which tell us that "King Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put into his heart."

Under the influences of Bathsheba, David, and Nathan, the royal child had grown up. At the age of ten or eleven he must have passed through the revolt of Absalom and shared his father's exile. He would have been taught all that priests or Levites or prophets had to teach—music and song, and the "Book of the Law of the Lord" in such portions as were then written. In the course of years he emulated his father's Psalms: the 2nd, 45th, 72nd, 127th, are on good grounds referred to his time. Science and art, music and poetry, had in this age received a new impulse.

The young sovereign at the age of nineteen or twenty came to the throne. Born to the purple, his soul cradled in grand liturgies, he had been

Digitized by Google

trained to think unceasingly of the surpassing palace of Jehovah, of which he was to be the builder.

Never before, and never after, did the kingdom of Israel take such a place among the great monarchies of the East—able to ally itself or to contend on equal terms with Egypt and Assyria, and stretching from the river Euphrates to the borders of Egypt.

Alas! the very first act of the foreign policy of Solomon's reign was to make affinity with Egypt. He married Pharaoh's daughter. (1 Kings iii. 1.) Since the time of the Exodus there had been no intercourse between the two countries; and Solomon's marriage is thought to have been a political movement. The immediate results were perhaps favourable enough. The new queen brought with her as a dowry the frontier city of Gezer. Gifts from the nobles of Israel and of Tyre were lavished at her feet, and a separate and stately palace was built for her ere long outside of the city of David, where she dwelt with "the virgins her fellows," probably conforming partially to the religion of her adopted country.

Solomon was a merchant-king. His alliance with the Phœnicians or Tyrians was only the continuance of that of his father David; for Israel was to be supplied from Tyre with the materials for the Temple.

The Jews now joined the Tyrians in their voyages of commerce, and Solomon's wide possessions opened a new world for that barter between nations. The new ships were manned by Phœnicians, but built at Solomon's expense. They sailed down the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean, to the Ophir either of Arabia or India, and to Sheba, the land of the sons of Joktan; and after three years' absence brought

Digitized by Google

back gold and silver, precious stones and woods, spices and ivory, and new forms of animal life—"apes and peacocks." We are told that Solomon himself travelled to Ezion-geber, perhaps to see this fleet set sail (2 Chron. viii. 17); and thus may have been caused the thoughts which appear in the Psalms on the wonders of the great deep, and on doing business in great waters. (Ps. cvii. 23—30.)

This, however, was but one branch of the traffic organized by Solomon; for to him was owing the foundation of cities like Tadmor in the wilderness, and others on the route to the Euphrates, which *had* each its own special market for chariot-horses and stores; while the erection of towns on the Lebanon points to a still more distant commerce, which developed the resources of Central Asia.

"And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much: and Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, the Arabians and Indians, and all the wisdom of Egypt: and he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five."

What has become of these proverbs and songs of the wisest of men? Such of them as were the utterance of the Holy Spirit to his soul, doubtless stand recorded in the Book of Proverbs as we have it, and in the "Song of Songs," which is Solomon's; and many more may be still bearing fruit in the wise sayings of the sages of the East, and even in the Apocryphal Books of "the son of Sirach" (Ecclesiasticus), and "The Wisdom of Solomon"—which, though not counted inspired, contain much that is to be remembered with profit.

The men of Judah watched for seven long years the rise of the Cyclopean foundations of vast stones which yet remain when all beside has perished. These gradually rose up and covered the area of

Digitized by Google

the threshing-floor of Araunah, till at last, "like some tall palm the massive fabric grew" to its perfection, and the day arrived when the ark from Zion was to be brought to its new home; and as it was solemnly placed in its golden sanctuary, the cloud—"the glory of the Lord," "the Presence"—as in the Tabernacle, filled the house of the Lord; the two tables of stone within it, the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, being the links that connected the wilderness life of the people with this their "Solomon's glory."

Alas! that a sovereign so honoured and even taught of God, departed afterwards from the shadow of His wings—*did not dwell in* "THE PRESENCE." There fell on him, as on other crowned voluptuaries, the weariness that seemed written upon all things, and which has impressed on the world for ever—

"Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

Ecclesiastes is the last of the three books that remain to tell the history of his mind; and the confessions of "The Preacher" are often used of the Holy Ghost to draw souls from things earthly to things heavenly; for Solomon above all men had been allowed to try all forms of earthly good, and to pronounce all alike unsatisfying. He had not gained this wide experience *unharmed:* "the world, the flesh, and the devil," prepared deep trouble for Solomon; his deep declension shaded the brightness of what was really his testimony for God, and showed the weakness of all flesh when depending on its own strength.

Solomon, like David, had great influence over Tyre, "the city on the rock in the midst of the sea," which Josephus says had been founded 230 years before Solomon's Temple. Hiram was the

Digitized by Google

great friend and helper of Solomon, and through each other their influence spread over the whole known world.

Tyre, when she afterwards apostatized, is reminded by Ezekiel of religious privileges that seem to have rivalled those of Judah.

"Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord God: Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God.

"Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee:

"With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures:

"By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches:

"Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness."

The 26th, 27th, and 28th of Ezekiel show how much the Tyrians must have derived from companionship with Israel. The words of the preacher, the King of Jerusalem, seem to have circulated through all lands; and yet the Queen of Sheba owns that she had heard nothing that came into comparison with the impression of her personal interviews. The commercial influence of the Great King doubtless did more than secure ivory, apes, and peacocks. In his age, *about a thousand years* before the Christian era, when the Greeks had not learned their letters, and the Romans had no existence, the Jews and Tyrians were probably in many silent ways the world's missionaries and instructors, although they had not learned of Christ to go and teach all nations, and would possibly have deemed it unworthy of their exclusive rights to do so.

Digitized by Google

Although Solomon had a thousand wives, we hear but of one son, REHOBOAM, whose mother was an Ammonitess. The history of his seventeen years' reign is contained at its greatest length in 2 Chron. x., xi., xii., but nothing is said of him during his father's lifetime. He must have been forty-one years of age when he came to the throne, and there is a bitter expression of Solomon's feelings in Eccles. ii. 18, which may probably have referred to him.

"I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me."

He must have been trained in the lap of luxury, and his character appears to have been, at least on his accession, light and headstrong; one on which his father's wisdom was thrown away. He went to the old sanctuary at Schechem to be crowned king of all Israel, all Israel having come to their ancient capital to make him king, and here Jeroboam, an appointed rival whom even Solomon had feared and sought to kill, being sent for from Egypt by all the congregation, returned from his exile, and spoke to Rehoboam in the name of the ten tribes, saying—

"Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." (1 Kings xii. 4.)

Rehoboam asked three days to consider, and he took counsel with old men and young men of his father's court, but it appears took no counsel of God; and then he gave the ungracious answer as the young men, who had grown up with him, advised him,

"My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; he chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."*

* The Rabbis translate this "knotted whips with points."

Digitized by Google

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS

THREE KINGS OF ALL ISRAEL:—REIGNED 40 YEARS: SAUL 1095 B.C.

PROPHETS OF JUDAH	Reigned Years	20 KINGS OF JUDAH.	Years B.C.	19 KINGS OF ISRAEL.
SHEMAIAH	17	REHOBOAM	975	JEROBOAM ... ...
	3	ABIJAM, *or Abijah* ...	958	
ODED	41	ASA	955	
AZARIAH			954	NADAB ... ...
HANANI			953	BAASHA ... ...
JEHU, *son of Hanani*,			930	ELAH ... ...
			929	ZIMRI ... ...
				OMRI ... ...
			918	AHAB ... ...
	25	JEHOSHAPHAT	914	
			897	AHAZIAH ... ...
ELIEZER			896	JEHORAM, *or Joram* ...
JAHAZIEL	8	JEHORAM, *or Joram* (4 years jointly with JEHOSHAPHAT and 4 years alone.)	889	
	1	AHAZIAH	885	
	6	ATHALIAH	884	JEHU ... ...
	40	JEHOASH, *or Joash* ...	878	
			856	JEHOAHAZ ... ...
ZECHARIAH, *son of Jehoiada* ...				JEHOASH, *or Joash* ... ...
	29	AMAZIAH	838	
			825	JEROBOAM II. ... ...
ZECHARIAH, *(who had understanding in the visions of God.* 2 Chr. xxvi. 5.	52	UZZIAH, *or Azariah* ...	810	
			784	*Interregnum for Eleven Years.*
			773	ZACHARIAH ... ...
			772	SHALLUM ... ...
				MENAHEM ... ...
			761	PEKAIAH ... ...
ISAIAH			759	PEKAH ... ...
MICAH	16	JOTHAM	758	
	16	AHAZ	742	
			739	*Hosea kills Pekah. Anarchy for some years.* ... ... HOSEA *settled in the kingdom* ... ...
			730	
			721	
NAHUM	29	HEZEKIAH	726	The Kingdom of Israel overthrown by the Assyrians.
			721	
JOEL	55	MANASSEH	698	
	2	AMON	643	
JEREMIAH	31	JOSIAH	641	
HABAKKUK	3 Ms.	JEHOAHAZ	610	
ZEPHANIAH	11	JEHOIAKIM		.....
EZEKIEL, DANIEL,	3 Ms.	JEHOIACHIN, *or Jeconiah*	599	
OBADIAH	11	ZEDEKIAH		
JUDAH carried captive to Babylon			588	
		GOVERNORS OF JERUSALEM AFTER THE CAPTIVITY.		.....
HAGGAI		ZERUBBABEL	536	
ZECHARIAH		EZRA	457	
MALACHI		NEHEMIAH	445	
		Book of Esther		

Digitized by Google

AND PROPHETS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

REIGNED 40 YEARS: DAVID, 1055, B.C. REIGNED 40 YEARS: SOLOMON, 1015, B.C.

Years Reigned	PROPHETS OF ISRAEL.	KINGS OF SYRIA.	KINGS OF ASSYRIA AND BABYLON.	KINGS OF EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA.	ELAM OR PERSIA.
22	Man of God from Judah. Ahijah.			Shishak—1 Kings xi. 40.	
2		Benhadad 1 Kings xv. 18		Zerah, *or Osarken* —2 Chron. xiv. 9—15.	
24					
2					
7 Ds.					
12					
22	Elijah. Micaiah.	Benhadad 1 Kings xx.			
2					
12					
28	Elisha.	Hazael			
17					
16	Jonah.	Benhadad 2 Kings xiii. 25.			
41	Hosea.				
	Amos.				
6 Ms.					
1 Mh.					
10			Pul		
2					
20			Tiglath-Pileser— 2 Kings xv. 29; xvi. 7 9.		
	Oded,		Shalmaneser — 2 Kings xvii. 3.		
9			Sargon; Isaiah xx. 1.		
			Sennacherib Esarhaddon—2 Kings xix. 37.	Pharoah, *or Sethos* Tirhakah	
			Nebuchadnezzar	Pharoah-Necho Jer. xlvi. 1, 10; 2 Kings xxiii. 29.	
			Belshazzar	Pharoah-Hophra Ezek. xxix. 3; Jer. xliv. 30.	Cyrus Darius Hystaspes Ahasuerus

Digitized by Google

Thus the kingdom was divided, through Rehoboam's rashness; and our readers will see the time when the double table of kings begins, and when Shishak was reigning in Egypt, who soon after came up against Jerusalem.

And by this answer the kingdom of all Israel has from that day to this been rent in twain. It is added "The cause was from the Lord," or literally "it was a turning brought about by the Lord, that He might perform this saying by the prophet Ahijah to Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. This Jeroboam was an Ephramite, who had grown up to be a "*mighty* man of valour," and was employed as engineer in the works of fortification round Jerusalem. Solomon had noted his energy and made him overseer of the works.

He had gone one day out of the city, when he met in a cornfield with a prophet named Ahijah, clad in a new garment, to whom had come the Word of the Lord concerning Jeroboam. This messenger snatched the new garment from his own back, and rending it in twelve pieces, gave ten of them to Jeroboam, telling him the Word of the Lord, that he would rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, excepting one tribe—the tribe of Judah, which should remain faithful for the sake of David, while the other ten should be given to Jeroboam, but not until after the death of Solomon.

When this matter reached the ears of Solomon, he sought the life of Jeroboam, but the young man fled to Egypt and remained there with Shishak its king, as we have seen, until Solomon's death.

We may mark this table of kings into three great periods.

1. Of 90 years; from the division of the kingdom to the death of Ahaziah, king of Judah, and Jehoram, king of Israel, both by the hand of Jehu . . . . . B.C. 884

Digitized by Google

II. 163 years from thence to the carrying away captive of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria . . . B.C. 721

III. 133 years, including the remaining history of Judah, down to the captivity of Babylon B.C. 588

And it is quite worth while to try and get a definite idea fixed in the memory of annals, that as we first read them in the Scripture, seem rather intricate. The Spirit of God has recorded, and it is for us to classify them in our remembrance.

The kingdoms were very small; that of Israel not ten thousand square miles, and that of Judah not four thousand. Israel's territory may have been a little less than Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cumberland, united. Judah a little less than Northumberland, Durham, and Westmoreland. Judah, however, lay South, and Israel North. Judah retained the capital, Jerusalem, with most of Solomon's treasures, and the worship of God was maintained at His chosen seat in Solomon's temple, for the sake of His covenant with David.

Although Jeroboam was chosen by God to punish Solomon's sins, this does not justify *his* becoming a rebel leader and then an idolator; his very first acts severed the bond of union with Jehovah, and his course was followed by his successors, of whom one after another, with scarcely an exception. We read,

"And he did evil in the sight of Jehovah, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin."

In the line of David and the tribe of Judah the crown was handed on generally from father to son, while in that of Israel the line of Jeroboam ended with his son, and then followed a series of murders and usurpations amidst which the families who reigned longest, those of Omri and Jehu, numbered

Digitized by Google

only four or five kings each. During the first span of ninety years we have mentioned after the disruption, Judah had six kings and Israel had nine.

The prophets of this era, in the idolatrous kingdom of Israel, were ELIJAH and ELISHA, and also Micaiah; the prophets of Judah being Shemaiah, Oded, Azariah, Eliezer, Hananai, Jehu his son, Eliezer, and Jahazeel. All these are named in Scripture, and their particular messages to the kings declared, but none of them give their names to the prophetical books of the Bible, which sixteen later prophets do, commencing with Jonah.

It has been remarked that grander prophets were sent to the Ten Tribes than to Judah, and among the noblest was Elijah the Tishbite, but Elijah came in consequence of their apostacy; kings had failed to keep the people from idolatry, and so had priests—then the prophets arose to remonstrate, prophecy was God's fresh protest by their mouth against man's sin.

We must notice the early messages to kings: Shemaiah is called "a man of God;" and when Rehoboam had assembled an army of 180,000 men, from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who yet addhered to him, to fight against Israel, and, as he hoped, conquer the rebels.

"Then the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying,

"Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, and to all Israel, saying,

"Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house: for this thing is done of me. And they obeyed the words of the Lord, and returned from going against Jeroboam.

The second message of Shemaiah was one of rebuke, but also of comfort. He first said to the prince of Judah,

"Thus saith the Lord, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak."

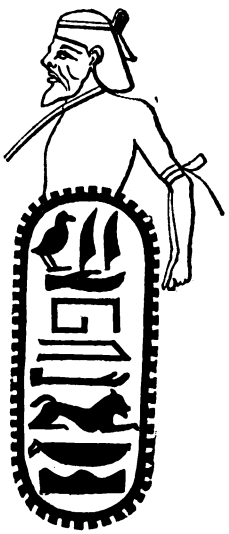
Digitized by Google

When in answer to this, the people humbled themselves, the Word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying,

"They have humbled themselves: therefore I will not destroy them, by the hand of Shishak.

"Nevertheless they shall be his servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries."

Now this Shishak, king of Egypt, has left a list of the places he conquered, on the walls of the old Temple of Karnak, in the city of Thebes; and the Spirit of God has given us a list relating to the same times, of the cities that Rehoboam made "fenced cities" in Palestine. (See 2 Chron. xi. 5—10.) Shishak came up with 1,200 chariots, 60,000 horsemen, and people without number, and "took the fenced cities" which pertained to Judah (2 Chron. xii. 4); in the fifth year of Rehoboam, when that king "forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him."



In the year 1828 the French student, Champollion, on his passage down the Nile, landed at Karnak, and pointed out the accompanying figure, one of sixty-three prisoners presented to Sheshonk by his god Amunra.

The turreted oval enclosing the name means that it is a walled city. Shishak is depicted as a gigantic figure holding a captive by the hair of the head, with one hand, which he is going to strike off with the other: there are five rows of such captives as these, with features evidently Jewish.

The cap with the lappets and the pointed beard may also be observed as worn by

Digitized by Google

the prisoners labouring on the mounds of Nineveh for Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, in Hezekiah's later day. They can be seen on the bas-reliefs in the British Museum; how remarkable that God should have brought them up from their grave, when they had been

"Buried three thousand years;"

and recently directed the research of the learned of this day, to old carvings on ruined temples which have endured thus long—to records whose age and value is now fixed only by the statements of the Bible.

Champollion read the Egyptian inscription within the turreted oval, as "Judah Malek, king of the country of Judah;" but while this reading is disputed by later scholars, the monument, according to their observations, is quite as valuable in confirmation of the list of Rehoboam's fenced cities. No one disputes the Jewish physiognomy of the whole series of captives. Very mean and diminutive they are made to appear in contrast with the gigantic god, Ammon—who leads them by strings fastened round their necks, to deliver them to his colossal king Sheshonk, or Shishak. Beneath eleven of the captives are inscribed in hieroglyphs, as above, the names of their cities; two or three of which you will find in 2 Chron. xi. 5—Shoco, Aijalon, and Adoraim, while others are identified as well known in Bible history. Taanach, Megiddo, Gibeon, Beth-horon, Mahanaim, Rehob, and Beth-Shan; and the Bible does not tell us that Shishak took prisoner *the king* of the country of Judah, but only his fenced cities.

You can look for the messages of God by Oded and Azariah in 2 Chron. xv. 1—8, referring to "a long season when Israel had been without a teach-

Digitized by Google

ing priest and without law." Also to the prophecies of Hanani and his son Jehu, chiefly directed to the kings Asa, Baasha, and Jehoshaphat, (1 Kings xvi.; 2 Chron. xix.) and after studying the reigns of each of the kings in the two lists as far as the avenger, Jehu the son or grandson of Omri, we had better fix our attention for the rest of this era on these grand prophets, Elijah and Elisha, who with Micaiah, appear in the list of the prophets, not of Judah, but of Israel.

Elijah the Tishbite was in his time like another Enoch and another Moses. Each prophesied of judgment to come, and asserted the Divine supremacy in the face of heathen idolatry around them; each proclaimed or revived the law of GOD, each of the two latter had the gifts of miracles, and each left the earth in an extraordinary manner.

Elijah's life was a crisis in the history of Israel. The life of Jeroboam had been followed by that of Ahab, and the worship of the golden calves, even if meant to be cherubic at first, had become mere Baalism. The God of Israel had been supplanted by the idols of Tyre. The curse of God on the builders of Jericho was defied, the thunders and lightnings of Sinai forgotten. The law of Moses was exploded. Jezebel, a daughter of the priest of Baal, shared the throne which had been occupied by David, and the abominations of Tyre and Sidon domineered in the capital of Israel.

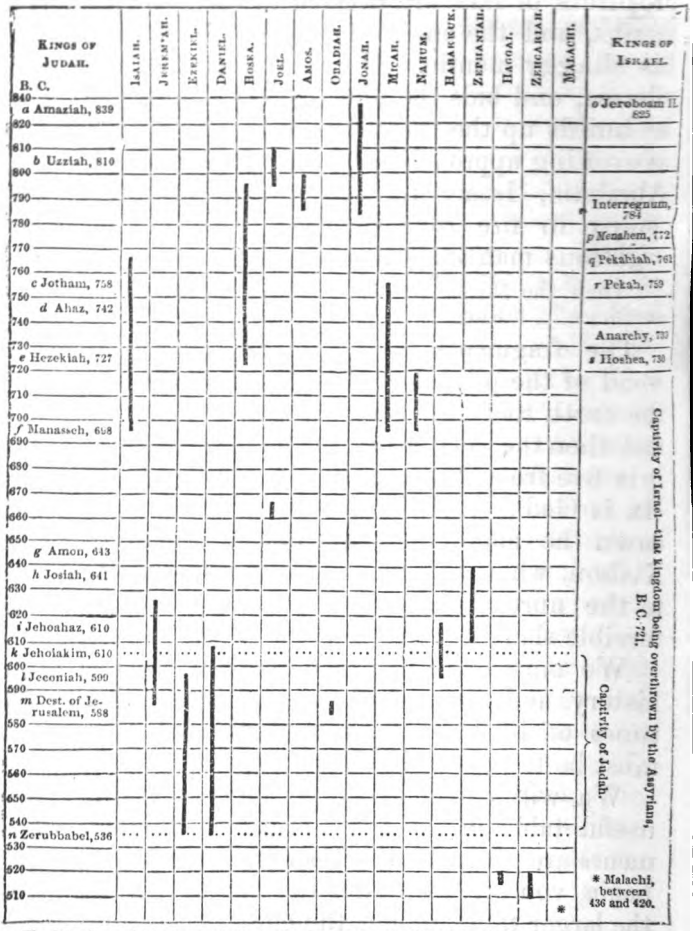
Then God overruled evil with good, and sent forth an Elijah. The character of that age is commented upon in the NEW Testament, implying that it has to be studied in the Old. In the Revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ to St. John, when He would speak of a corrupt priesthood, He calls it a Jezebel, (Rev. ii. 20), and when He would describe those who shall rise up and witness against Anti-

Digitized by Google

the Kings, which will close the Old Testament history.

TABULAR VIEW OF THE PROPHETS,

SHOWING THE PERIODS DURING WHICH IT IS SUPPOSED THEIR PROPHECIES WERE DELIVERED.



The date after each king's name indicates the commencement of his reign.—Joel is placed twice, as it is doubtful at which period he lived.

a 2 Kl. 14; 2 Ch. 25.
b 2 Kl. 14 21; 2 Ch. 26. 1.
c 2 Kl. 15. 32; 2 Ch. 27.
d 2 Kl. 16. 1; 2 Ch. 28.
e 2 Kl. 18. 19; 2 Ch. 29: Is. 36. 37. 38.
f 2 Kl. 20. 1; 2 Ch 33.
g 2 Kl. 21. 19; 2 Ch. 33. 21.
h 2 Kl. 22. 1; 2 Ch. 34. 1.
i 2 Kl. 23. 31.
k 2 Kl. 23. 36; 2 Ch. 36. 5.
l 2 Kl. 24. 8; 2 Ch. 36. 9.
m 2 Kl. 25; 2 Ch. 36. 19.
n Ezra 3. 4, 5.
o 2 Kl. 14. 28; 2 Ch. 13. 6.
p 2 Kl. 15. 14.
q 2 Kl. 15. 22.
r 2 Kl. 15. 25.
s 2 Kl. 17. 1.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



ANCIENT ROME.

Digitized by Google

THE SECOND PERIOD OF
THE TIMES OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL:
FROM ELISHA TO ISAIAH.

No. XV.

WE hope that you will so study the Table of Kings and Prophets given you in our last chapter in its three separate portions, that the great messengers of God who lived and spoke in each era, will rise in your memory with each period of years.

The first period, you will remember, included ninety years after the division of the kingdom—that is, from 975 B.C. to 885 B.C. The names of the comparatively *good* kings of Judah are given in large capitals. Perhaps you referred to ASA, and remember God's protecting him against the mighty Ethiopian army under Zerah, or "Osarken" (named on Egypt's tablets), because Asa said, "O Lord God, in thy Name we go against this multitude." (See 2 Chron. xiv.)

Elijah's portrait occupied us last, and our present study must commence with Elisha, who stood to him somewhat in the light that Joshua did to Moses.

"He went after Elijah, and ministered to him." (1 Kings xix. 21.)

It is supposed that he did this for the space of eight years before Elijah's translation; Elisha's call to such ministry is said to have taken place about 906 B.C., and his death, after the discharge of his

Digitized by Google

prophetical office for nearly seventy years, occu
about 838 B.C. When we hear of him first, he
a young man, ploughing with twelve yoke of
in the rich pastures of the Jordan valley.

"Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle (of rough she
skin) upon him."

This was in fulfilment of the word of the Lord:

"Elisha, the son of Shaphat, shalt thou anoint to be prop
in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth
sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from
sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay." (1 Kings xix. 16, 17.)

Hazael was king of Syria, who stepped to the throne by smothering his master. Elisha had foreseen "the evil he would do," as he read his face with tears, on the previous day; while Hazael, amazed, enquired, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" God made that usurper the scourge of both Judah and Israel, whose kings united in self defence against him and the Syrians. Jehoram was king of Judah who had married Athaliah, the idolatrous daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, Jezebel herself being the daughter of Ethbaal, the Canaanite king of Zidon. This accounts for all the Baal worship that arrayed itself against the commandments of God in both kingdoms, and to punish which God raised up Elijah, and prophesied as above, of the avenging Jehu.

But ere we mark the avenger Jehu, we must note the career of Elisha. His early life, it would seem, had been agricultural and domestic. He asks leave to take farewell of his friends, and then obeys the Divine summons, and attends his master to the close of his wondrous history. After seeing him parted from his side by a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and swept up into heaven by a whirlwind, Elisha received in that hour according to his earnest

Digitized by Google

prayer, a double portion of the Spirit that had moved his grand and awful friend. His native character seems less powerful and more gentle than Elijah's, but he was equally used as an instrument of the Holy One—of the Most High God—as Elijah had been, to deliver messages of judgment, whose truth was often proved by their instant fulfilment. "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha," said the sons of the prophets.

To part the waters of Jordan, to increase the measure of the widow's oil,—to heal the bitter poisonous spring, to inflict and cure disease, to warn and counsel kings, and to defy their rage,—knowing himself surrounded and protected by unseen angelic guards,—to raise the dead to life, and even in his own dead bones to preserve the gift of healing. (2 Kings xiii. 21.) All this was in Elisha's destiny. Elisha so different from Elijah, and yet so one with him in soul! No wild and shaggy hairy man, but with smooth and well shorn locks,* which the very children contrasted maliciously with those of his forerunner,—using a walking staff like other citizens, glad of quiet repose in the friendly balcony, where bed, table, and chair, were prepared for him by the kindly lady of Shunem. He is not found in the desert of Horeb, or lonely on the top of Carmel, but in the crowded thoroughfares of Samaria, in the gardens of Damascus, and by the waters of Jordan. Still ever the Lord's mouthpiece, and instructing kings till his dying day, when Joash the monarch of Judah receives from him a promise of success against Syria, whose measure was to be the measure of his own perseverance and energy. "Thou shouldst have smitten

* This is implied in the term "baldhead."

Digitized by Google

five or six times," says the prophet, "then ha
thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed
(The man of God was wroth, for the king smote
three times, and stayed.) King Joash howe
was privileged to repeat to Elisha at the time of
death the very words which Elisha had uttered
Elijah—"My father! my father! the chariots
Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Were the ro
eyes unsealed as the servant's had been previous
at Elisha's request, to see these glorious attendan
of the man of God's departure? (2 Kings vi. 17.
They had, *we know*, surrounded him in mortal pe
what so likely as that they bore his soul *to* the
mansion of its rest?

It is Elisha who sets apart Jehu to his *office of* avenger; but he does not do this personally.

"Elisha the prophet, called one of the children of the prophets," and bid him "gird up his *loins and* take a box of oil in his hand and go to Ramoth Gilead, and look out there Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel."*

It is needful to observe to some of our readers that this Jehu was not the son of Jehoshaphat king of Israel in the table; he is most often known as the son of Nimshi. There are also two Joram's in the table who were not the same, but brothers-in-*law*, by marriage of Joram, king of Judah, who *was* the son of king Jehoshaphat, with Athaliah (the daughter of Jezebel) who as a widow succeeded for seven years her son Ahaziah, whom Jehu slew.

What a scene of the retributive justice of God is depicted when Jehu, after his sudden anointing and

* Tradition says that Jonah was this prophet, also that he was the son of the widow of Zarephath, brought to life by Elijah, and destined afterwards to be the messenger to Nineveh.

Digitized by Google

hasty enthronement by his captains on the top of the stairs (see 2 Kings ix. 13) takes his own war chariot and drives according to his habit, "furiously" to Jezreel, and meets the two kings Joram and Ahaziah uncle and nephew, in the field of Naboth the Jezreelite.

"Is it peace, Jehu?" said King Joram.

And Jehu answers—"What peace? while the witchcrafts of thy mother Jezebel are so many?"

"There is treachery," cries Joram to his nephew king, while Jehu draws a bow with his full strength, and Joram sinks dead in his chariot—Ahaziah by other hands sharing the same fate; and then Jehu remembers the day, when with his captain Bidkar, he had followed Ahab to this very plat of coveted ground acquired by murder, and heard the Lord's threatening by the mouth of Elijah, "I have seen the blood of Naboth, and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the Lord."

But Jehu is a man of blood; and not only *one* son of Ahab, but *seventy* must fall; "all that remained" of the idolatrous house; and then proclaiming "by subtilty" an assembly for Baal, as if *he* would be his servant, even more than Ahab had been, he gathers together all his prophets and his priests throughout the land; and when the house of Baal is full from one end to the other, by a sweeping massacre does this same Jehu remove by the united blows of fourscore men without, (his guard and his captains,) the whole heathen population at a stroke, from the kingdom of Israel.

Oh how striking it is, after studying this story, to behold in the galleries of the British Museum the war chariots, and driving such as Jehu's, gone

Digitized by Google

out of mind and memory for thousands of years, but come up from their grave to throw light on these very chronicles of Israel.

Who does not know the black obelisk in the central Nineveh room of the British Museum? Mr. Layard had carried a trench fifty feet into one of his sandy mounds; it appeared to yield but little worth notice, and he did not intend to pursue it further, when just as he left the spot a corner of black marble was uncovered, at the very edge of the trench. This corner was that of an obelisk lying on its side, ten feet below the surface, sculptured on the four sides, having on each five small stone pictures; and above, below, and between them were arrow-headed inscriptions, 210 lines in length; all the figures sharp, and well defined.



The habits and dress of the Assyrian king on this

Digitized by Google

obelisk seem not greatly to have varied from those which distinguished him in the portrait given you at p. 39 and p. 221; he is here twice represented, followed by attendants bearing his arms. He has precisely the same simple helmet, and "the Presence" of Assur accompanies him as before. A prisoner, whom he has conquered, is at his feet, and before him his vizier with folded hands appears submissively to wait the royal decree concerning him. In the second bas-relief below, the same figures are repeated, but the king has the royal umbrella held as at p. 20, over him, and has also the divining cup in his hand. In the first compartment he had his bow and arrows—he had just won his victory. In the second he appears in peaceful state—he offers a libation before the Presence. Perhaps, like the King of Babylon, described by Ezekiel in after years (chap. xxi. 21), "He stands at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways," to use divination, he has "*made his arrows bright, and consulted with images.*" This may explain the double representation of the king.

It will also be remarked that the person bowing down at his feet, has on the peculiar cap and long robe—the cap like a bag, the end of which falls back, instead of towards the front like the Phrygian cap, and this costume, wherever found, seems by all writers on the subject, to be considered to belong to the Hebrews. Sir H. Rawlinson fixes the scenes represented upon this obelisk to the date of the usurper Jehu. He reads in the inscription that Shalmaneser I. led twenty-three expeditions into the kingdoms of his neighbours, and among these he names the Israelites. From all the conquered peoples he took tribute; and the inscription mentions the name of Hazael king of Syria. "I went to the

Digitized by Google

towns of Hazael of Damascus, and took part of his provisions." "I received the tributes of Tyre, Sidon and Byblus."

Consequently on the submission of the above, according to Sir H. Rawlinson, follows that of Jehu, "Son of Omri" who sends as tribute to Shalmaneser a quantity of gold and silver in bullion, together with manufactured articles in the more precious of the two metals.

This submission of Jehu, is *not* recorded in the Bible, but a similar submission *is*, of Ahaz to Tiglath-pileser.

"So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son. Come up and save me out of the hand of the King of Syria, and out of the hand of the King of Israel, which rise up against me.

"And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the King's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria." (2 Kings xvi. 7, 8.)

The tribute or spoil, whichever it may be, on the obelisk, seems rendered in the form of elephants' tusks, gold dust, rich vestures and vases, precious woods, wine-skins and fruits, copper caldrons or kettledrums, all borne by the wearers of the long robes, some of them with fillets round their heads and bare feet. Animals also appear in the procession; the elephant and rhinoceros, camels and apes; some are dressed for the sacrifice, according to heathen custom, so that man and beast are declared subjugated to the Assyrian king of kings. The turned up toes and twisted caps are found on three levels, out of five.

Sir Henry says this is Shalmaneser's obelisk, but an earlier Shalmaneser than the one said in the Bible to have "come up against" Samaria. (2 Kings xvii. 3.) It seems to have been *ready to be* carried away with the sculptures by Esarhaddon, for HIS palace at the

Digitized by Google

south-west corner of the Nimroud mound, for it was lying on its side, and had been buried for five-and-twenty centuries, when the finger of Divine Providence so remarkably guided towards it, the apparently unprofitable trench.

You should notice that the obelisk was *not* found in the earliest north-west palace which lay *the deepest* in Mr. Layard's mound, *and is represented by the first long Nineveh gallery* in our museum. It was found in the *central* palace, which lay next in the mound, and is represented in the museum *by the central room* between the first gallery and the second, in which last are grouped all the conquests of Sennacherib. The obelisk attracts immediate attention in the central room, and some slabs on the walls also should be noticed, which have a singular history. When Mr. Layard first excavated here he came upon many tombs; one, when he lifted its alabaster slab, contained a skeleton, the skull entire, but it crumbled to dust on the entrance of the air. *Five feet below* these tombs he traced the remains of a building; walls of unbaked brick could yet be seen, from which slabs seemed to have been removed. After clearing away twenty tombs, a space of fifty feet square presented a singular appearance. Above a hundred sculptured slabs were uncovered, placed in rows one against another, like the leaves of a gigantic book, and evidently ready for removal to another place.

Three or four of these slabs, removed by the labourers of two thousand five hundred years ago, were to find their place, not in any fresh Assyrian palace, but in the British Museum. One of them represents the taking of a city, within the walls of which grew Judah's palms. The place has been sacked, and the conquerors are carrying off the

Digitized by Google

spoil. Two eunuchs, standing near the gates, count as they pass the sheep and cattle driven away, and write the numbers with a pen on rolls of paper or leather. On another slab one of Judah's daughters, clothed in sackcloth, and with her elegantly formed pitcher, tends her camels; and on yet another issuing from the city gates, with fettered hands and driven by a proud Assyrian, the sons of Judah, with the caps and turned-up boots already named, seem to lament and mourn.

To this conquering nation of Assyria some time after the reign of Jehu, there was sent the Jewish prophet JONAH, the first of the sixteen prophets whose writings are preserved in our Scriptures.

From his time, to the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, there were raised up six prophets.

To Judah.		*To Israel.*	
Joel.	From Uzziah's	From Jeroboam II.	Jonah.
Isaiah.	reign to	to	Amos.
Micah.	Hezekiah's	Hosea.	Hosea.

THE PROPHET JONAH.

During all the reign of Solomon we hear nothing in the Bible of Assyria or Babylon; and the fact that the Euphrates was recognized as the boundary of Solomon's kingdom (2 Chron. ix. 26), suggests the inference that the monarchies between the Euphrates and the Tigris were then comparatively feeble.

We heard of Assyria at its rise—in the days of Assur and Nimrod. Balaam mentioned Assur in his desert prophecy. Mesopotamia led ISRAEL captive after her grand conquests under Joshua; therefore the new conquerors could have possessed no insignificant military power some centuries before the building of the Temple on Zion. And now Assyria looms again before our eyes, as "the

Digitized by Google

word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise! go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."

This was an unusual commission for a Jewish prophet; and it was certainly not the first that had been given to him, for this Jonah, the son of Amittai, a prophet of Gathhepher, of Zebulon, had predicted the restoration of the ancient boundaries of the kingdom of the ten tribes (2 Kings xiv. 25), and that prediction received its accomplishment in the reign of Jeroboam II., in whose reign, it would seem, Jonah must have lived. Jeroboam was thirteenth King of Israel, and son of Joash, whom he succeeded on the throne 825 B.C. Jonah may have prophesied early in his reign, as we must again remember that *great cities are not built in a day*, it is to the Nineveh of which these very palaces at Nimroud formed a part that Jonah comes —perhaps, a century and a half after the time of Solomon—to a "Nineveh" containing a vast population, more than 60,000 persons of the ignorant or infant class, and those and their elders *not* packed together as in our western cities, but scattered over the plains of the Tigris as the different mounds are now—the city made up of several distinct walled quarters, distinct from one another, divided by cultivated lands. (Isfahan and Damascus to this day occupy as much space as London or Paris, and do not contain a tithe of the population.) We are told that the so-called Nineveh was three days' journey in extent; and a day's journey being twenty miles, this makes its circumference sixty miles, which Mr. Layard tells us would enclose the various mounds as in a circle, thereby verifying the description of the Bible.

Digitized by Google

This is the first notice we have, after the mission of Jonah, of kings of Assyria, in connexion with the kings of Israel and Judah. Menahem's thousand talents of silver were equal to £340,000.

The Assyrian inscription says, that "Menkihimni of Samirina" (Menahem of Samaria), paid tribute to a king of Assyria—Phuloch, or Pul, or Vul-lush.

That record is on a pavement slab from the chambers of the Nimroud palace. Menahem's tribute has been thought excessive, but it is here stated that from the King of Damascus, Vul-lush took 2,300 talents of silver, besides tribute in gold and copper.

With Pul began the conquests of Assyria over Israel, which were continued by his successors. The prophets, Amos and Hosea, at this period uttered little else but threats and warnings—"I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, says the Lord by Amos, like as corn is sifted in a sieve."

All the chapters of this Prophet are a sorrowful wail over the sins of his people, till, in a few verses of the last chapter, the inspired herdsman sings a far-off strain of comfort at the close of his dirge, unfolding times of mercy yet to come to the Lord's ancient exiled people. (See Amos ix. 14, 15.)

Amos was a shepherd of Tekoa and a dresser of sycamore trees, chosen to fill the office of a prophet, though not trained in the regular prophetical schools. He makes numerous allusions to natural objects and agricultural occupations, as might be expected; and he tells us that he prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, "two years before the earthquake." This earthquake is referred to in Zech. xiv. 5, in illustration of one which is yet future, as affecting the Mount of Olives.

The duration of HOSEA's gift of prophecy seems

Digitized by Google

to have been nearly fifty years, thus resembling that of the Prophet Isaiah. Hosea's prophecies related chiefly to the kingdom of Israel, and Isaiah's to that of Judah. Both commenced to prophecy in the reign of Jeroboam II., and continued during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Both Prophets therefore see the invasions of the Assyrian kings — Tiglath Pileser, Shalmaneser, Sargon, and Sennacherib.

You should read the reign of Uzziah, lasting fifty-two years (2 Chron. xxvi.)—a good and prosperous king of Judah, "whose name spread far abroad, for he was marvellously helped till he was strong." And then, alas! when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction. What a lesson of fear and caution for the successful—his heart was lifted up. He wished to usurp the office of the priests in the temple, and to burn incense; and the Lord smote him with leprosy in his forehead, and he was a leper to the day of his death; and Jotham his son judged the people of the land in his father's stead.

Jotham is a good king. He became mighty and established his ways before the Lord his God; but yet the people became more and more corrupt. And in those days the Lord began to send against Judah Rezin king of Damascus, whose attacks proved so disastrous under Jotham's weak and wicked son Ahaz, who "made molten images to Baalim:" "he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus," "which were the ruin of him and of all Israel." (2 Chron. xxviii. 23.)

The people of Assyria you will remember carved, *as the only object to be worshipped* in their temples, not a statue, but a *sign* or *symbol* of the presence of their great god Asshur—we gave it you on p. 38.

Digitized by Google

They expressed the idea by a winged human figure rising out of a circle; and it always accompanied their king.

This winged figure, which was very universally worshipped, is called in Scripture "Baal," or Baalim, and the Sacred Tree which accompanied it "The Groves;" but the word "groves" has given a wrong impression—it ought to have been left as in the Hebrew, "Asshayrah." How marvellous is it to suppose that we have in the Museum before our eyes "the groves" so often mentioned in the Books of Kings and Chronicles. The Baal symbol is sometimes called the *Chammánim*, rendered in the margin "Sun Images." (See 2 Chron. xxxiv. 4.) During King Josiah's reformation he brake down the altars of Baalim, in his twelfth year, and the *Sun Images that were on high above them* he cut down, etc. We have seen what Elijah did to the 950 prophets of Baal and of "Asshayrah" which ate at Jezebel's table (1 Kings xviii. 19); for God had said to His people Israel:

"Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone [margin, 'any stone of picture'] in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the Lord your God."

"*Know ye not what these things mean?*" saith the Lord, to us who pass by such stones "crying out," after nearly 1900 years of privilege in the Gospel dispensation. To *us* they ask a solemn question. While they point the Jews to their ancient sin of the worship of Baalim and the Groves, a sin which has rung the funeral knell of their empire, and laid it low for the "seven times" of God's prophetic wrath —they point both Jew and Gentile to *nothing less* than "the True Presence" which these idolatries caricatured.

Digitized by Google

THE WINGS OF GOD.

"Keep me, oh, keep me, King of kings,
Beneath Thine own Almighty wings."

Now before and after the Flood, men have wilfully gone out from "the presence" of God, and have made an idolatrous use of the symbol of the wings, and, nevertheless, this image is often used in Scripture. "The Lord recompense thee," it was said to Ruth, "under whose wings thou art come to trust." (Ruth ii. 12.) "Hide me," says David, "under the shadow of thy wings." (Ps. xvii. 8.) "In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge." (Ps. lvii. 1.) "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust." (Ps. xci. 4.) "In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." In Ps. cxxxix. this presence is described as world-surrounding—"Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" etc., the wings are over all the earth; and this implied protection.

What said the living Saviour to Jerusalem?

"How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. xxiii. 38.)

And did He not say to His disciples, "Go ye, therefore, and teach *all* nations," and it may aid us afresh to comprehend that Divine and overshadowing love to realize it in the figure of "coming under the wings."

What is it that constitutes a Christian? Is it not dwelling in the Presence, coming under the wings? Once drawn by the Holy Spirit into that blessed shelter, once in the Presence, through the shedding of the blood, the blood of the Lamb—who is he that condemneth?

"It is Christ that died," is the reply, and who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Rom. viii. 35,) or from those whom we love who are in the

Digitized by Google

same Presence? It may be said of those who dwell in the Presence that "*they never die;*" they only draw nearer and nestle closer under the Almighty wings when they leave the earth. Have we beloved ones at the world's end—on the other side of the globe? If they are in the Presence, they are not beyond the wings. The Egyptian and Assyrian idea of the wings which by men of old time was perverted to idolatry, may be for those "*in Christ,*" a blessed idea, and worth gathering up from these old stones, for it includes St. Paul's *description* of our inheritance in Eph. i. 3.

NEBO.

Before we leave the subject of these ancient idols, we must observe two figures of the Babylonian god Nebo, forwarded to this country by Sir *H.* Rawlinson from the South-east palace of *Nim*-roud. An Assyrian king was named after him 1,200 years B.C.



THE GOD NEBO.

The kings of Babylon take their names from him—Nabo-Nidus, Nebuzaredan, Nebu-chadnezzar; and he is named in Scripture in *associ*-ation with Bel. The ponderous and erect appearance of this idol *would* seem alluded to in the words:

"Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth. Their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle. Your carriages were heavy *laden*; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together. They could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity." (Isa. xlvi. 1, 2.)

There is great importance in the resurrection of these heathen deities, as witnesses of the truth of God's Word.

Digitized by Google

Sir H. Rawlinson is said to read the arrow-headed characters on Nebo's robe as follows:—"That this statue was dedicated by the sculptor to Phulukh (Pul), the king of Assyria, and to his lady, Sammuramit, or Semiramis, Queen of the Palace." It is here declared that Nebo is "the God who teaches or instructs;" "he who hears from afar," "he who possesses intelligence." Nebo is elsewhere called "inventor of the writing of the royal tablets." In an inner chamber of his temple, the Birs Nimroud, all the bricks were found stamped with an arrow-head.

The idolatrous kings of Israel and Judah who bowed down to these images, were always punished for the forsaking of the Law, while those who observed the Law prospered. The kingdom rose or fell according to that rule; this renders the history of the Jewish people especially interesting and instructive, and Israel was now unconsciously tottering to its fall.

ISAIAH.

Isaiah prophesies in the days of four sovereigns—Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. His first general message is to Uzziah and Jotham, when to the outward eye their kingdom is flourishing in its worldly condition, but to the prophetic eye all is soon to be laid waste. Isaiah sees the chosen nation in the light of a man wounded unto death, and soon to be left desolate. The seeming religion of Judah is now all hypocrisy; "the silver is become dross," and "Zion must be redeemed with judgment." Oh! what a guide are the first chapters of this prophet down the Kouyunjik side gallery of the British Museum. But we are not going to enter this last Nineveh gallery till the next chapter, as we shall want your fresh attention to Isaiah's wondrous book.

Digitized by Google

We want to fix in your minds at the close of this second portion of the Table of the Prophets two great events,—I. The carrying of the ten tribes of Israel into captivity by Shalmaneser 722 years B.C., which was predicted by the prophet Micah (i.—6) about thirty years before it happened (for it *took* place in the sixth year of the reign of Hezekiah); II. We wish to point you to the *time* of this prophecy of Micah's, uttered in the reign of Jotham, as that when the infant power of ROME arose (*753* B.C.) and became the standing date from which *all* the great kingdoms of this world have agreed *to* reckon. We give you as a frontispiece, the ruins of Ancient Rome as they endure to this day.

Micah recalls the name and the mercy shown *to* his father Abraham (vii. 20), and therefore *looks back* from the exile of the ten tribes, no less than 1260 years, to the time when Terah abode in Ur of the Chaldees, and Abram was a youth of eighteen, to whom the Lord God appeared when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran. It was from this very point of the leading captive the ten tribes that it was given to the Prophet Daniel and to the Apostle John to *look forward* 1260 years, and see Rome Papal arise out of the ashes of Rome Pagan, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up. Gibbon the historian of Rome tells us that the first Pope was elected A.D. 538, which, added to the date of 722 B.C., makes the number 1260; but this would lead us on to the New Testament era. We must first close the Old Testament story with the exile and partial return to Jerusalem of the royal house of JUDAH.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



THE PEAKS OF ISH-TA-ZIB.

Digitized by Google

THE FALL OF JUDAH.

No. XVI.

WE cannot say whether the prophet Isaiah stands out most as the man of his own age, or as the world's teacher for ever.

The passing wars of his time are in his prophecies dignified by their connexion with glowing predictions of the future kingdom of the Messiah; his soul is ever looking "onward and upward;" and we feel that he must for himself have realized by earnest faith that "beautiful and glorious," "Branch of the Lord," (ch. iv. 2,) which would sometime spring from the old root of Israel's desolations. His writings are placed in our Bibles, *first* in the order of the books of the prophets (so-called), chiefly because of those sublime predictions, and possibly because Isaiah's *one* book, as we have it, is larger than those of all the *twelve* "minor prophets" put together.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, are commonly called "the greater prophets," and their books follow one another in our canon, although, actually, *between* ISAIAH and JEREMIAH, come Joel, Micah, Nahum, and Zephaniah—*between* JEREMIAH and DANIEL, Habakkuk—and *between* DANIEL and EZEKIEL, Obadiah. After EZEKIEL, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, complete the list.

Jonah, Amos, and Hosea, we must remember, preceded all the rest, and of these we have spoken; now let us fix our minds on ISAIAH, the prophet of four kings' reigns (see the first verse of the prophecy),

Digitized by Google

Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, and belonging therefore like Hosea to our IInd and IIIrd periods. See p. 270.

Let us observe how he tells us of his marvellous consecration to his office:

In the year that king Uzziah died, (*i.e.* B.C. 757, and his death occurred at the age of 70, and in the house of lepers), Isaiah beholds a vision in the court of the temple; appears to gaze into the holy place, and to see through the cedar gates and veil withdrawn, straight on to the throne of the heavenly king within;

"His train filled the temple."

Unearthly and radiant beings float around that Presence. The Lord of Hosts, who spoke in the burning bush to Moses, in the still small voice to Elijah, now appears in His cherubic brightness to Isaiah, and, in so doing, gives to the young prophet an abasing view of himself in his earthly weakness, so that he cries out, "Woe is me, for I am cut off. I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips."

Then on these defiled lips was laid by a flaming seraph a living glowing coal from off the altar, and henceforth those lips were to utter the words that for all ages would move the world. Then comes the voice from the sanctuary, "Whom shall *I* send? and who will go for us?" and the prophet thus made ready, replies, "Here am I, send me."

And he is sent, as he is warned, on a forlorn and hopeless mission, to blind eyes, and heavy ears, and unconverted hearts; the description of his own people for age after age in misery and exile, concerning whom his far off comfort could only be according to the name he had given to his son, "Shearjashub," a remnant shall return—a remnant

Digitized by Google

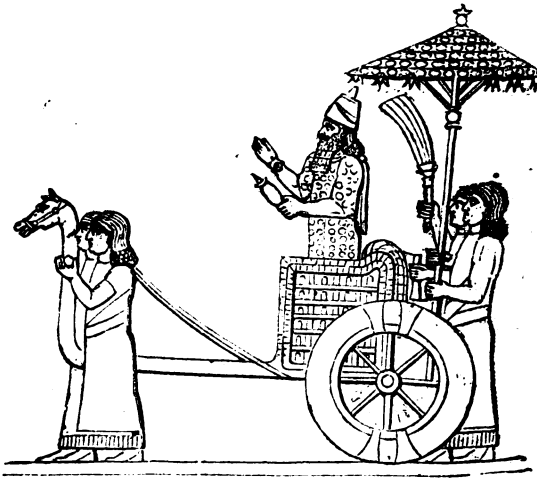
from the destructions of Assyria and Babylon—and far away in the future, in a day which is future still, when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, when the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea,—*in that day* the Lord shall set His hand "*again a second time*" (chap. xi. 11) to recover the remnant of His people from Assyria and from Egypt, and from Cush (Africa), and from Elam (Persia), and from Shinar (Mesopotamia), and from Hamath (Syria), and from the islands of the sea, (very possibly Great Britain); and He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth; in that day "with joy shall they draw water out of the wells of salvation."

But meanwhile across what a wilderness of woe, and on what hundreds of years of destruction, does the prophet's eye look for his people. Isaiah had a second son, whose symbolic name was Maher-shalal-hashbaz, or "speed to the spoil," (see chap. viii.) and before this child could utter the name of his father or his mother, the vengeance was to begin; and Damascus with Samaria (the northern kingdom of Israel) were to be carried away to Assyria; the prophetic symbol of Assyria and Babylon was an eagle (see Ezek. xvii.) and Isaiah says in his viiith chap. "the stretching out of *his* wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, oh Immanuel." The people had refused to dwell under the wings of God, had "cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel," (Isa. vi. 24) therefore the Lord would "hiss for the nations from afar," and "behold they shall come with speed swiftly," "with speed to the spoil," whose arrows are sharp, and all

Digitized by Google

their bows bent, and their wheels like a whirlwind; (look at the Assyrian war chariots, and the kings with their bent bows on the Assyrian marbles), they were to "roar and lay hold of the prey, and carry it away safe, and none should deliver it." This was the prophecy to Ahaz previous to the fall of Samaria.

Judah also is warned in the prophet's tenth chapter. "Shall I not, as I have done to Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?" And then it is said, that having begun with His own people, the Lord would next punish "the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks."



SENNACHERIB IN HIS CHARIOT.

Behold him at Kouyunjik: the king stands in his chariot, beneath the royal parasol, to receive the captives and the spoil taken from the conquered people.

There would be no better guide than Isaiah the

Digitized by Google

prophet, if girded in the black haircloth of mourning, he could utter his third and fourth chapters down the Kouyunjik, or third Nineveh Gallery, in the British Museum, how the "mighty man and the man of war, the prudent and the ancient and the captain of fifty, the cunning artificer and the eloquent orator" must "go into captivity," for "Jerusalem is ruined and Judah is fallen." They must go and pile mounds for Sennacherib's palaces, and must transport his great bulls.

Oh! if this great prophet could indeed arise and see how Sennacherib has delineated his conquests and his achievements! We perceive how the "high places were builded;" and upon the builders the prophet would say, as in his forty-seventh chapter—

"Thou didst show no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke."

The Assyrian artist has most successfully conveyed a remarkable expression of fatigue into the attitudes, and of age into the countenances and limbs of the king's captives. Many of them are surely Jewish: here is the cap-point turning back, and lappets now cover the ears; bare-footed, and bowing beneath their heavy baskets of stones, the "honourable man" and the "mighty" and the prudent and the counsellor painfully ascend the mound. These are no labourers born—they are patrician slaves. There are younger men among them, whom the task-masters seek to afflict more heavily; and some of these wear fetters, others are chained two and two. (In the glass cases before these slabs lie *the very fetters*, massive and sprinkled with the verdigris of age, which galled those limbs of old.) Has the Lord returned evil for evil? Isaiah says:

Digitized by Google

"The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

"What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord God of hosts." (Isaiah iii. 14, 15.)

"O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.

"I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like mire of the streets." (Isaiah x. 5, 6.)

THE SIEGE OF LACHISH BY SENNACHERIB.

The prophet Isaiah sings the Psalm of the vineyard (see Isaiah v.):—

"My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. ... What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

Judea was the land of the vine and the olive. In the delineation of the country conquered by these Assyrian lords, and in defiance of all perspective, vines with great bunches of grapes, causing us to think of the vines of Judea, overhang the scenes of blood and murder.

The remaining bas-reliefs in that gallery all belong to the time of Sennacherib, and depict further details of Assyrian cruelties. On the mound men are doing the work of horses—either pulling the king in his chariot (a sort of moveable throne), or dragging carts, or, along the river-sides, boats containing weighty obelisks; and they are all men with the peak and lappet caps, driven by tyrant overseers with sticks.

"In this living and universal language of art, we may well believe that we see a picture of the sufferings to which the children of Israel were ex-

Digitized by Google

posed when their cities fell before the conquering Assyrians, and their inhabitants were sent to colonize distant provinces of the empire; and thus, doubtless, were driven the inhabitants of Samaria through the desert to Halah and Habor, by the river of Gozan, and to the cities of the Medes."

THE SUBTERRANEAN HALL.

We can now re-pass the central saloon, and by way of the lobby chamber descend the stairs to inspect the records of further deeds of cruelty by Sennacherib before Lachish.

The besieged have defended themselves with great determination: archers and slingers are showering arrows, javelins, stones, and blazing torches on the enemy. Part of the city has, however, been taken. Beneath the walls the Assyrians are commencing their tortures. A procession of captives is driven into the presence of the king, who, gorgeously arrayed, receives them seated on his throne.

Again, we see the unmistakeable Jewish physiognomy of the defeated race, and the women clothed in sackcloth are in the same carts as in the central palace slabs. The captives are brought into the royal presence by the Tartan of the Assyrian forces, possibly the Rabshakeh himself (followed by his principal officers), who were speedily afterwards despatched to Jerusalem.



SENNACHERIB.

"And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem." (2 Kings xviii. 17.)

Digitized by Google

Submission on the part of Hezekiah to tribute appears to have taken place at Lachish.

"And Hezekiah, King of Judah, sent to the King of Assyria to Lachish, saying—I have offended, return from me; that which thou puttest upon me I will bear; and the King of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah King of Judah 300 talents of silver and thirty talents of gold."

Sennacherib's own record of this on his cylinder, and also between the feet of the Kouyunjik bulls is as follows:—

Then Hezekiah, King of Judah, who had not bowed down to my yoke, forty-six of his large cities, and smaller towns belonging to them without number, in the fury of my vengeance I utterly destroyed.

Two hundred thousand one hundred and fifty persons, small and great, male and female, horses, mares, mules, camels, oxen, and sheep, without number, from the midst of them I carried away and distributed them as spoil. He himself, like a fugitive bird, shut himself up in his royal city, Jerusalem.

He built towers of defence (or battlements) over it, and he strengthened and rebuilt the bulwarks of his great gate.

In the meanwhile, the cities which I had sacked I finally cut off from his dominions, and I gave them to Mitinti, King of Ashdod, Padiah, King of Amgarrun, and Ismi Bel, King of Gaza.

Thus I diminished his country. And in addition to the former tribute and the land-gift (or land-tax) I augmented the tribute of . . . . and imposed this burden upon them. As to Hezekiah himself, the dreadful terror of my power had overwhelmed him.

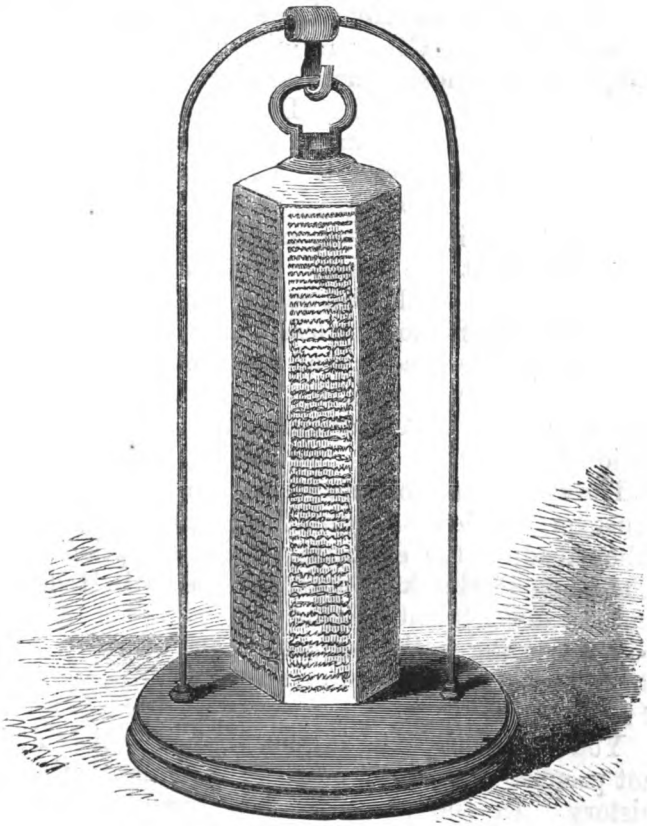
Then I seized and carried off all his artificers, and all the other . . . . whom he had collected in order to fortify Jerusalem . . . . . with thirty talents of gold, eight hundred talents of silver, scarlet robes, precious *stones* (?), royal *thrones* (?) made of ivory, palanquins of ivory for travelling, skins and teeth of elephants, beautiful precious woods of two kinds, altogether a vast treasure. And also his daughters, and the *female inhabitants* (?) of his palace, and their men slaves and women slaves.

This mighty spoil, unto Nineveh, my royal city, after me I brought away. And he swore a solemn oath to pay tribute to me, and to do homage to me in future.

In passing through the lobby chamber at the top of the stairs in the Nineveh gallery you may find

Digitized by Google

the cylinder *suspended on a frame* on which all the above inscription is written. It is called Sennacherib's cylinder, and Sir Henry Rawlinson reads upon it that he inscribed his records in the 16th year of his reign.



CYLINDER OF SENNACHERIB.

The characters on this cylinder appear when magnified as at p. 29 of this volume. They expressed the thoughts of the old Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Per-

Digitized by Google

sians, ere the commencement of profane history, and only fell into gradual disuse after the time of Alexander's conquests, about 330 B.C.

The heathen annals of Sennacherib have been compiled not only from this which is called the Taylor cylinder, but from large inscriptions *between the limbs* of some Colossal Bulls at Kouyunjik, the upper part of whose figures had been destroyed.

"These bulls," says Mr. Layard, "were all more or less injured. The same convulsion of nature, for I can scarcely attribute it to any human violence, that overthrew these great masses, had shattered some of them into pieces, and scattered the fragments amongst the ruins. Fortunately, however, the lower parts of all, and consequently the inscriptions, had been more or less preserved, and to this fact we owe the recovery of some of the most precious records with which the monuments of the ancient world have rewarded the labours of the antiquary."

These inscriptions may now be seen in the Museum, *on the wall*, behind the great bulls from Khorsabad, at the entrance of the Egyptian Hall. The name of Hezekiah upon them is spelt Hiskiah; and the *thirty* talents of gold exacted as his tribute, both according to the Scriptures and the records of this cylinder, is a very wonderful coincidence. (See 2 Kings xviii. 14.)

You will notice that in the book of Isaiah all is not prophecy, there are portions of the most stirring history. In the year 722 B.C. the kingdom of Israel ceases, and Judah subsists alone under Hezekiah. After various predictions against the surrounding nations, Egypt and Assyria, and Tyre and Babylon, the thirty-sixth chapter commences with the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah,

Digitized by Google

which had been given in 2 Kings xviii., xix., and xxth chapters. Isaiah does not mention the tribute, but describes Rabshakeh's wrath and Hezekiah's prayer.

And it is Isaiah who repeats the wondrous tale of 2 Kings xix. that the angel of the Lord went forth and destroyed the army and smote in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000 men, and in the morning they were all dead corpses.

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold.
The sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
Where the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed on the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved and for ever grew still.

The widows of Asshur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
For the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord.

It was the word of the Lord by Isaiah, that He would put His "hook in the nose, and His bridle in the lips" of the Ninevite king; and that He would cause him to fall by the sword in his own land, and then he records its fulfilment.

"So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead." Ch. xxxvii. 37, 38.

Digitized by Google



A curious light is thrown on this passage by the fact of an eagle-faced figure called Nisroch, being often found in the North West Palace of Mr. Layard's mound. It may have come to be looked upon as a god in the after days of Sennacherib, though at first it may only have been a symbolic representation of the power of Asshur. The eagle could look at the sun, and he worships the Asshayrah by the king's side; he is probably the symbol of the Assyrian empire; and can we approach this figure now and not think of Ezekiel's parable and riddle?

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

"Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel;

"And say, Thus saith the Lord God: A great eagle with great wings, long-winged, full of feathers, which had divers colours, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar:

"He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffic; he set it in a city of merchants."

But Sennacherib was not finally to destroy Judah in the time of Hezekiah. *Her* destruction was to come from one who is called by God "the hammer of the whole earth," Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. The policy which drew Hezekiah towards Babylon in the latter part of his reign, may have

Digitized by Google

had an evil influence over his young son Manasseh, for it is certain that the religious errors of Manasseh were Babylonish, and his punishment came from the same quarter.

The description of Manasseh's idolatries exceeds that of all other forms of vice that Israel had learned from the heathen. He restored all the groves and high places that his father had removed, re-established the worship of Baal, which Jehu had overthrown, and added to the licentious rites of Ashtoreth such awful abominations as made princes and subjects "rulers of Sodom" and "people of Gomorrah." The ark was displaced from its shrine in the temple, and altars for the worship of the host of heaven were set up in its courts. Manasseh dealt with wizards and necromancers, and seduced the people to do more wickedness than the nations whom Jehovah had destroyed before them. Against these awful sins witnessed all the prophets of the time as Isaiah had done, in the visions which foresaw them, but the king tried to silence all remonstrances by the fiercest of persecutions. Manasseh filled Jerusalem with innocent blood. Josephus says that executions took place *every day*. And there is an abiding tradition that Isaiah himself was among the martyrs. He must, however, have been nearly ninety years of age at the accession of Manasseh, therefore it is scarcely probable.

After the death of Isaiah the prophetic voice is hushed till the time of Josiah.

Esarhaddon carries Manasseh captive to Babylon. This king (some of whose bricks have been recently recovered) is otherwise called the great and noble Asnapper who re-colonizes Samaria with settlers from Babylon and other places. Manasseh's captivity marks the beginning of the fall of Judah, and

Digitized by Google

the Bible mentions it as a very important era. Jer. xv. 1, 4. When God said *as certainly* that He would "cast this people out of his sight, and let them go forth," as He had said to Abraham that He would choose them and give them the land of Canaan, He fixes the date of His Divine resolve from the time and sins of Manasseh, rather than from the fall of Jerusalem afterwards.

To the very king, Manasseh, whose personal sins were specified by God as winding up the doom of his people—to that very king was at last granted repentance, and as it seems "repentance unto life." His evil son Amon succeeded him in a short reign of but two years, and then came Josiah the pious and righteous child-king who rose into manhood as a reformer of all evil, and in the eighteenth year of his reign sent to Hilkiah the high priest for silver to pay the workmen whom he had set to repair the house of the Lord. Josephus says the errand was for *gold* to cast fresh cups and vials for the temple service; and in bringing out the money, whether gold or silver, from its hiding-place, the high priest lighted on the holy books of Moses, long unread, and gave them to Shaphan the scribe to read to the king, to whom they came with all the force of a fresh revelation of the will of God.

"The king having heard that," says Josephus, "sent to Huldah the prophetess (2 Kings xxii. 15), that she might seek to appease the wrath of Jehovah, which the books said was upon the people for their transgressions, lest they should incur the peril of being cast out of their country like the ten tribes."

Huldah was evidently the person most distinguished at that time for prophetic gifts in Jerusalem. Jeremiah was yet at Anathoth unknown to fame, although the word of the Lord began to come to

Digitized by Google

him in the thirteenth year of Josiah. (See Jer. i. 2.) When the prophetess heard the appeal of the king's messengers, says Josephus, she told them from God that He had *already* passed sentence, and meant to destroy the people and cast them out of their country, a sentence no prayers could reverse, since it had fallen upon them on account of their long transgression of the law, but concerning the young king who sent to enquire, it was added—

"Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, I will gather thee unto thy fathers . . . in peace, and thine eyes shall not see all the evil."

THE BURNT ROLL.

We must now pass on from Josiah, who *found* a part of the word of God when it was lost, to JEHOIAKIM, who dared to *burn* a part of it, in defiance of God and His prophet Jeremiah.

Josiah and Cyrus are the only two persons in Scripture besides our Lord, prophesied of *by name*, long before their birth. You will find the prophecy concerning Josiah in 1 Kings xiii. 2, and its literal fulfilment in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 5.

When he found the roll, he honoured it, and caused the people to "stand to it," as for thirteen years afterwards they did. With Josiah ended the peace, the prosperity, and the piety of Judah; and the history of that kingdom closes with the reign of Jehoiakim, which lasted eleven evil years. *He was the first person who dared to destroy any part of the written word of God*, and he might therefore well be Judah's last king. The reverence of the Jews in general for their Divine writings was so great, that if, in copying the manuscripts, they made a single error, they would reject the material thus spoiled, and have begun all again. They never permitted

Digitized by Google

themselves to retouch or erase; and in coming to the name Jehovah, they always wiped their pens and refilled them. When the manuscripts became at all old or injured, they reverently buried them in graves; and this is the reason why there have not hitherto been found any very old Hebrew manuscripts of the Scriptures—none earlier than A.D. 1200.

Jehoiakim felt none of this reverence. He daringly sent his page, Jehudi, to fetch the roll of the prophecy which he heard Jeremiah had written against him, from the scribe's chamber in the temple, and then he also told Jehudi to read it to him.

Jehudi, however, had read but three or four columns, when the king, who sat in his winter house with a fire burning before him, snatching it from the reader, cut it with a penknife, and cast it into the fire.* Two or three of the princes around begged him not to burn it, but he would not hear them. He was then about to seize the writers, Jeremiah and Baruch, but it is said, "the Lord hid them."

For this crime it was decreed by God that Jehoiakim should have none to sit upon the throne of Judah, and that his dead body should be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost, which was literally fulfilled, as recorded by Josephus in the eighth chapter of his tenth book,—"the body of the king was thrown into the fields without the walls of the city;" "his burial was as the burial of an ass, beyond the gates of Jerusalem;" and then all the wealth of the city, its princes, its mighty men, and many thousands of captives, were carried away into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, for seventy years, to Babylon.

* See Jeremiah xxxvi. 23.

Digitized by Google

THE TAKING OF JERUSALEM BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin, was placed on the throne as a vassal prince, but retained his position only three months, and was then carried captive to Babylon; his uncle Zedekiah, governed eleven years under the same tribute to Babylon, after which, rebelling, Jerusalem was once more besieged, and finally "spoiled" by Nebuchadnezzar. "The virgin marble of the courts ran red with blood like a reeking winepress in the vintage," and the two great pillars of the temple porch—Jachin and Boaz—with the brazen sea and its twelve bulls, were broken up and carried to Babylon; after which the temple and city were set on fire, and the walls levelled with the ground, while Moab and Seir were saying—"Behold, the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen" (Ezek. xxv. 8), and the house of Edom cried also —"Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof" (Ps. cxxxvii. 7, 9.)

THE FALL OF NINEVEH.

And sixteen years before Judah passed into captivity, 588 B.C., she had seen the fall of Nineveh—she knew the prophecies of her inspired Nahum—and she knew how well the prophet's words had been fulfilled.

The "cedar," "whose root was by great waters, whom all the trees of Eden envied," his branches were fallen, his boughs were broken, and it was written—

"All the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him." (verse 12.)

The destruction of Nineveh and the extinction of the empire took place between the time of Zephaniah and that of Ezekiel, about 606 B.C. The city

Digitized by Google

never rose again from its ruins. The total disappearance of Nineveh is fully confirmed by the records of profane history. Herodotus speaks of the Tigris as "the river on which the town of Nineveh formerly stood." An extraordinary rise of the Tigris, which swept away a portion of the city wall, gave admittance to the enemy. The Assyrian monarch, considering further resistance to be vain, fired his palace, and destroyed himself, and Cyaxares completed the ruin by razing the walls and delivering the whole city to the flames; the elements of water and fire combining to fulfil the prophecy of Nahum—

"The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved." (Nahum ii. 6.)

"The gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies; the fire shall devour thy bars." (Nahum iii. 13.)

The other royal palaces of the region show equal traces of fire with those of Nineveh; and calcined alabaster, masses of charred wood and charcoal, colossal statues split through with the heat; all that composed the royal palaces and temples went down together into ruins and heaps, to be forgotten for twice twelve hundred years. The winds of age after age piled the sands of the desert over their tomb, and they became the grass-grown sites of Arab villages, and were thus preserved of God to come up as a sign from heaven to us who live in the nineteenth century after Christ.

Those ancient enemies, the Assyrians, had perished from the region, but the remnant of Israel still remains there—brought low and humbled, but still "the beloved of the Lord."

"I often watched the Chaldeans or Nestorians," says Mr. Layard, "as they reverently knelt, their heads uncovered, under the great Bulls, celebrating

Digitized by Google

the praises of Him whose temples the worshippers of those frowning idols had destroyed."

And surely the Lord beheld "His people," and the children of Abraham His friend, and had brought *them*, and none other, to bow down before Him at this fresh entrance to the crumbling halls of the Assyrian kings.

There were priests and deacons of that ancient Chaldean Church among the workmen.



A FAMILY OF THE MODERN "KALDANI" OR NESTORIANS, EMPLOYED BY MR. LAYARD IN THE EXCAVATIONS AT NINEVEH.

The picture at the commencement of this chapter is of the Koordish Mountains, which form a part of Ancient Assyria, to which the Nestorian Christians betook themselves centuries ago, for safety from persecutions as bloody as those which beset the Waldenses of Piedmont. The American missionaries (the venerated Dr. Perkins and his colleagues), who have rekindled the lamp of God's Word for the sheep of these forgotten folds, have with their native helpers scaled these peaks and threaded these gorges,

Digitized by Google

to point them to Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd. We have had letters from Nestorian Bible-women dwelling with their missionary husbands in such lonely glens.

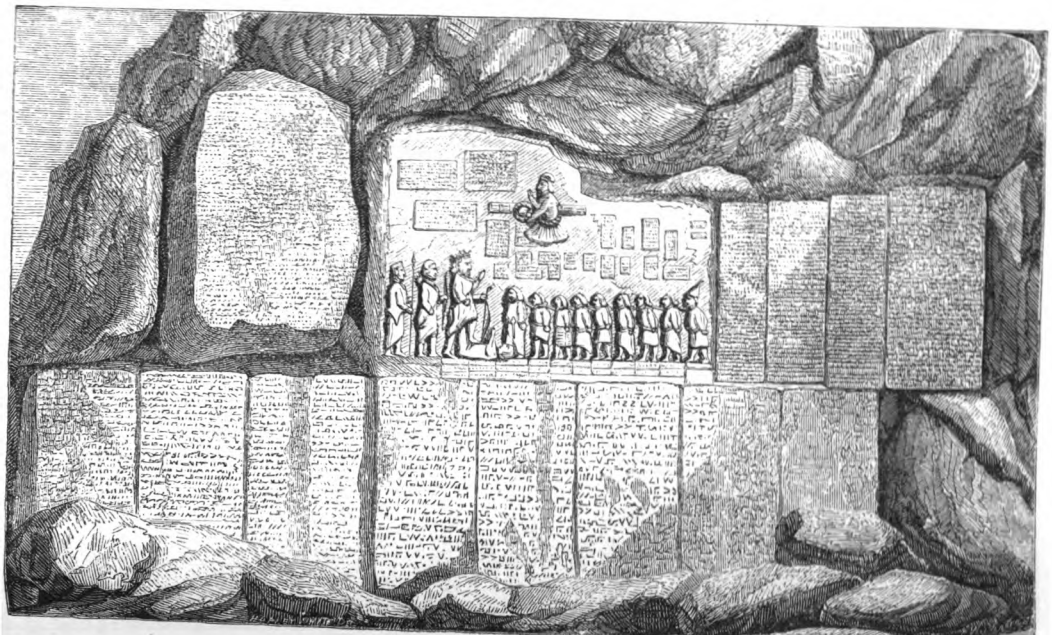
In the interim between this and the Day of Pentecost their race have been the "salt" of the Eastern world during the "dark ages" of Europe. The Tablet of Segnanfoo cries out in witness that they had penetrated with their Bible even to China.

"When the Day of Pentecost was fully come," and the Holy Spirit spake by the disciples in the "own language" of "every nation under heaven" to the foreign dwellers at Jerusalem, *who*, besides the devout Jews, *first* understood the utterance of "the wonderful works of God"? *Who but the Parthians (the modern Kurds or Chaldeans), Medes and Elamites (Assyrians and Persians), and the dwellers in Mesopotamia?* The blood of Israel in their long captivities was mingled with those old nationalities, and only the two tribes had returned to Jerusalem under Ezra. The inspired men of Palestine now took their ancient brethren captive with the truth—the truth that "all the house of Israel might know assuredly that God had made that same Jesus whom Judah had crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts ii. 36.)

There seems no reason to doubt that at this era, the era of their baptism and receiving of the gift of the Holy Ghost (see Acts ii. 38, 39), that Chaldean Church of Christ took rise which has ever since called itself the "Beni Israel." At this hour their forlorn remnant is completing its almost 4000 years' history,—the children of Abraham by divine choice, of Abraham who himself was called of God out of Ur of the Chaldees.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



THE ROCK OF BEHISTUN.

Digitized by Google

JEREMIAH AND THE NATIONS.

No. XVII.

It was for her IDOLATRY that Judah lost her land. She rejected God and His word: and since the days of Jehoiakim, she *has never possessed her kingdom* but as the servant of some foreign power. She held it under the Babylonians, the Persians, the Grecians, and the Romans,—the four Gentile kingdoms which the prophet Daniel calls "Beasts," in his seventh chapter; and even now under the Roman power in its papal form, (the so-called "holy shrines" being scattered over all her mountains,) Jerusalem still abides till the times be fulfilled, when, returning *first* to that Moses and the prophets (Mal. iv. 4) whom Jehoiakim cast aside, she shall forswear the vain traditions with which she has overlaid the Law, and go up once more to build the old wastes, and repair the desolations of many generations; and there, "*at Jerusalem*, the spirit of grace and supplication being poured upon her," as Zechariah tells us, at chapter xii. 10, "She shall look upon him whom she hath pierced, and mourn;" and "all nations shall call her blessed in her delightsome land." (Mal. iii. 12.) The prophecies foretelling the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar will be found in—

Isa. iii. Jer. xxv. 9—12; xxvii. Ezek. xii.

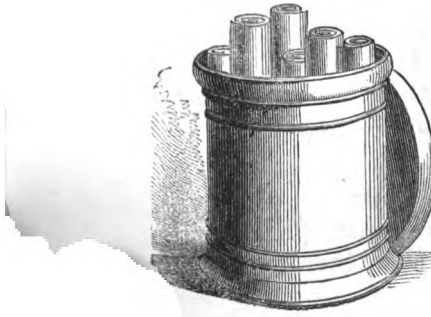
She had worshipped, after the manner of Egypt, creeping things and abominable beasts (Ezek. viii.) even close to the sanctuary of God, therefore He at

Digitized by Google

last had dealt with her in fury; and Ezekiel (x. 8), had seen Him depart from off the threshold of the house on the cherubim's wings, "scattering coals of fire" over the devoted city, as He went to return no more in glory in that dispensation.

It is from the three great prophets, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, that we are enabled to learn most about the scenes of the seventy years captivity. The warnings of Jeremiah followed his people on their way, the visions of Ezekiel on the river Chebar assured them that the glory which once filled their temple was not wholly withdrawn from them even as outcasts and exiles, Ezekiel helped them thus to bear their sorrows, and Daniel cheered them on to their partial return into Palestine.

The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were directed to write their prophecies in a roll, as well as to utter them in some public place where all might hear. The roll was in many cases affixed to the gate of the temple, where all might read it; and they often accompanied their message by some significant action on their own part. Jeremiah made a yoke and put it on his neck, to foretell the captivity of Babylon. Isaiah walked barefoot, and stripped off his rough prophet's garment, to show what was coming on Egypt.



When the prophecy was not to be fulfilled for ages, they were commanded to seal it up, "it being requisite that the originals," says Mr. Horne, "should be compared with the event when it occurred." It seems to have been a custom for the prophets to deposit their writings in the temple,

Digitized by Google

and lay them up before the Lord. There is a belief among the Jews that all the sacred books were placed in the side of the ark. We here give you a picture of the cases in which written rolls were generally kept in this age, and long after it.

Isaiah is the chief prophet in the *first*, or Assyrian period of prophecy; and Jeremiah is the chief prophet in the *second*, or Babylonian period. King Hezekiah and probably Isaiah died about 700 B.C.—Jeremiah's long career begins 70 years afterwards, in the reign of Josiah, whom he so greatly loves and tenderly laments.

Jeremiah continues to prophesy until after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; it is probable that his inspired warnings extend over a period of more than 50 years. He must have seen the destruction of Nineveh, and it is remarkable that in writing his twenty-fifth chapter, "in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, when taking the" wine cup of divine fury at the hand of God, and causing all nations to drink of it; "all the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth" (ver. 26,) Assyria is not mentioned. Hence it is believed that *already*, and perhaps just previously, God had "caused the nations to shake at the sound of its fall," (see Ezekiel xxxi.) "Behold the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon." The date of Ezekiel's prophecy is from the year of the destruction of Jerusalem, 588 B.C.; and he goes down into exile to Babylon with his people. Jeremiah remains in Palestine, and is afterwards carried against his will to Egypt, with Baruch, his friend and scribe.

But we must trace his remarkable life from its beginning.

He had a wonderful call to his prophetic ministry,

Digitized by Google

which we find recorded in his first chapter. Before his birth, like Josiah and Cyrus, the Lord tells him he was sanctified and ordained as "a prophet to the nations," *i.e.*, not only to Israel, but to the other kingdoms of the earth. He was to hand the cup of doom to Judah first. In humble fear at such a summons, Jeremiah says:

"Ah, Lord God! I cannot speak, I am a child."

But the touch of the Lord is laid upon his mouth, like Isaiah's glowing coal, and his mournful and mixed message is declared to him.

"Whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.
"I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.
"See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down . . . and to build, and to plant."

Then the prophet sees the vision of the fast budding almond tree, and of the seething-pot, about to overflow, against "all who have burned incense to other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands," whilst testifying against all such by Divine authority. Jeremiah, the prophet of evil, is to be made a defenced city, an iron pillar, a brazen wall, no body can hurt or hinder him till his message is delivered against kings and princes, people and priests; morning after morning, year after year, "rising early and speaking," (chap. xxv. 3,) from the time of Jehoiakim to Zedekiah. The doom must be uttered, and uttered daily, leaning on Him who said, "I am with thee to deliver thee."

And it was so.

But who is this child in his own esteem, thus made by the Almighty His messenger?

Jeremiah is the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth; his uncle, Shallum, bears the same name as the husband of Huldah the prophetess.

Digitized by Google

(2 Kings xxii. 14.) Hanameel was his cousin; he seems to have been in his early youth intimately connected with the persons most remarkable in the religious history of the period. As a boy he would hear among the priests of his native town, not three miles distant from Jerusalem, of the idolatries and cruelties of Manasseh and his son Amon; he would doubtless have studied the writings of Micah and Isaiah, and as he grew towards manhood he would be keenly alive to the work of the reforming king Josiah, and the teaching of the prophetess Huldah, probably his own relative. His friends, Baruch and Seriah, were the grandsons of Maaseiah the governor of Jerusalem. And now came the word of the Lord unto himself, and (at about, it is supposed, the age of twenty) a life-long martyrdom was set before him, a struggle against all the earth. At this time is found the lost portion of the book of the law of the Lord. The king rends his clothes and cannot rest till he has found a prophet to expound its meaning, and it is declared to him by Huldah. (2 Kings xxii. 15.) The secretary, Shaphan, brings her message to Josiah, and the king aloud recites the newly found roll of the law, probably the Book of Deuteronomy, from end to end, to an immense concourse of the people in the court of the temple, while he leans against the pillar at the entrance of the inner court. (2 Kings xi. 14; xxiii. 3.)

And then his reformation began: and he held the great last Passover, and to the utmost of his ability, began to uproot the shrines of the pagan worship on all the surrounding hills. He burned the images and ground them to powder, and executed the priests of the false worship on their own altars, and then arose at the call of God, even a greater than Josiah, this young prophet Jeremiah, to set forth afresh the

Digitized by Google

code of Sinai, but with a nobler meaning now than in the days of Moses, to shew forth the LOVE OF GOD, as the chief ground for his dealings with his people, and responsive love to God for the first time is set forth as the true ground of service to Him, and urged upon the nation with the force of Divine appeal.

But it did not reach their hearts: "*too late*" is written upon even this revival. The word *had gone forth* for Manasseh's sake, as Jeremiah tells us (chap. xv.), and the doom had begun. Forty years before had Manasseh been carried captive, and in less than as many years more the Holy City too would be trodden under the foot of the heathen. Zephaniah looks out, the watchman of Jehovah, and declares—

> "The day of the Lord is at hand,
> The great day of the Lord is near:
> A day of clouds and thick darkness:
> Against the fenced cities,
> Against the lofty towers."

And it came—it came in the death of Josiah, slain by the Egyptian archers in his chariot at Megiddo, and carried to Jerusalem to die, when Jeremiah chants his funeral-song, as pathetic as David's over Jonathan. Every family shut it itself up and mourned apart, as one mourneth for his only son, for the last, the very last, royal hero of Israel. His loss formed the burden of mournful songs even after the captivity.

But it is in the reign of Jehoiakim, placed on the Jewish throne as a puppet of Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt, that Jeremiah comes forth to fulfil his prophetic destiny and testify against that evil king. Here the great struggle of his life begins.

On one of the solemn feast-days, when the temple

Digitized by Google

was filled with worshippers from all the cities of Judah, Jeremiah appears to predict that Jerusalem shall become a curse. (Jer. xvi. 8.)

"Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die."

Yet for a time he escapes their vengeance, as powerful friends protect him, and as had been promised "the Lord was with him to deliver him:" he is deterred by no terror; he re-writes the roll which Jehoiakim destroyed. As the dangers he prophesied drew near, there was given to this prophet a clearer insight of the purposes of God for His people—he was shown the potter casting away the imperfect vessel, and as we see in his twenty-fifth chapter and twelfth verse, the term of the seventy years' captivity is clearly revealed to him.

But, it is wonderfully given him as it was to the prophet Isaiah, to *see beyond* the gloomy cloud into a glorious future. He is himself put in the stocks, and thrown into a hideous pit in the prison where he sank into the mire; but still "the Lord is with him to deliver him," and he is taken out of it but to reiterate his message and advise surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. He was not carried captive to Babylon, but left with a small remnant of his friends in the Holy Land, which remained even when the Holy City was no more. The new capital was to be at Mizpeh, on the ridge overlooking Jerusalem from the north-east. From these heights Jeremiah may have descended to pour forth his Lamentations, which you find at the end of his prophecy, and of which each chapter is a separate elegy. From this point he could watch the pilgrims flocking in the first

Digitized by Google

freshness of grief, as *they do still*, to the Jewish wailing-place. (Jer. xli. 6.)



THE PILGRIMS TO JERUSALEM.

Jeremiah was weary of the weak and wayward rule of the unhappy princes that closed the line of Judah; but God gives him to console himself with the thought, that while the ancient covenant is to be done away, there will be a new covenant, a new understanding, between God and man—written in the hearts of those who are brought into union with their Heavenly King.

The Almighty Ruler of nations has unsealed his eyes, and shown him that he stands on the edge of a vast revolution in his part of the globe, *for the old primeval kingdoms which were founded after the Flood were about to be broken up, dissolved,*

Digitized by Google

and swept away by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, of Babylon, "the hammer of the whole earth"—just such a revolution as if England, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, and Turkey were to be extinguished by the sudden spread of the Russian empire over the breadth of Europe, amid tremendous conflicts and fearful massacres.

The details of this revolution form the main subject of the writings of Isaiah, Nahum, Amos, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah. The prophet Daniel foretells the four great empires that were to be founded on the ruins of these earlier monarchies —the BABYLONIAN, the PERSIAN, the GRECIAN, and the ROMAN.

"Not to understand something therefore of this revolution," it has been truly observed, "is not to understand nearly half of the Old Testament Scriptures;" therefore we have endeavoured to lead you by these successive steps through the books of the Bible, and to know a few things that the last fifty years have brought to light concerning them; so that in approaching the revolution of Nebuchadnezzar you may *realize this most stirring tragedy* enacted in past times on the sorrowful earth, and directed by the providence of God.

During the thirty-three years that our Redeemer trod the soil of the ancient East—while, in the depths of His humility "He came to His own, and His own received Him not"—the eye of the All-seeing must surely have beheld the heathen relics piled in darkness beneath the foundations of Arab villages. He remembered His prophet Jonah, and took him for a sign of His own tarrying in the tomb; and He remembered Nineveh and its burial, when He said it should rise in the judgment with the generation to whom He spoke, which could

Digitized by Google

have been none other than the Jews, His countrymen.

From Palestine, the "strip of country about the size of Wales," which yet was "the high bridge between the Nile and the Euphrates, (see p. 216,) Jeremiah could look down in idea—and in part *actually*—on all the nations to whom he prophesies evil, from his 44th to his 51st chapter. First he writes to the Jews in Egypt, and tells them that the country where they have taken refuge shall not escape: neither shall *they* by their flight. (See ch. xliv. 12.) Nebuchadnezzar shall smite Egypt, "Pharaoh and all that trust in him."

This ancient kingdom was intensely proud. Her king, Pharaoh Hophra, says Herodotus, "had boasted that it was not even in the power of God to dethrone *him*"; and Ezekiel compares him to a great dragon lying in the midst of his streams, and saying, "My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself." (Ezek. xxix. 3.) Nebuchadnezzar caused him to be strangled in his own palace. He made dreadful havoc in the dominions of the Pharaohs. God had put the sword into his hand, and he was to break the images, and burn with fire the houses of the gods, while the Jews, who had gone down to Egypt, and wickedly determined to burn incense to the queen of heaven *there*, were to be consumed in these judgments, till there was an end of them.

From that hour Egypt has been the basest of the kingdoms, and Israel has leant upon it as a staff no more. The prophecies against it are found in—

Isaiah, xix.; xxx. 1—7. Ezek. xxix. and xxx.
Jer. xlvi. Ezek. xxxi. 1—18; xxxii.
Joel. iii. 19.

And for their fulfilment, besides the destruction

Digitized by Google

caused by Nebuchadnezzar, you must likewise refer to the times when the Persian war-cry rang through the crowded streets of Thebes, when Cambyses laid his destroying hand on Karnak and its sculptures, and when Alexander the Great completed the ruin his predecessors had begun.

PHILISTIA.

The 47th chapter of Jeremiah concerns the destruction of the Philistines, the people of the five powerful cities to the south of Palestine—Gaza, Ashdod, Askelon, Gath, and Ekron. Their country, from its situation, held the keys of Egypt, and through its rich plains passed the commerce of Syria and Phœnicia from the North, and the spices of Arabia from the South. The Philistines had ships and traded in slaves with Edom. See the prophets Amos and Joel. Nebuchadnezzar took Gaza and reduced the population to a remnant.

TYRE.

The same 47th chapter of Jeremiah also includes the prophecy concerning Tyre, which is so much enlarged upon by Ezekiel. Tyre, the capital of Phœnicia, to the north of Palestine, on the seaboard—the city on the rock, overlooking the sea—the noblest colony of the sons of Mizraim (Gen. x. 14; Jer. xlvii. 4), reposed beneath the shadow of mount Lebanon. Four years after Nebuchadnezzar had been used to chastise the Jews, he was employed in punishing the sins of Tyre.

Tyre, the merchant-city, was to the old world what London now is to the new. Her glory is described in the 27th chapter of Ezekiel; her fall is prophesied in the 28th. Of Nebuchadnezzar's army during the siege it is said, that by the toils of

Digitized by Google

thirteen years before its walls every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled—a result arising from wearing their armour so long, and carrying burdens to build the high terraces from which they made their attack. Seldom has the deep gathered such a harvest to its treasures as when Tyre fell in the midst of its waters. Its ruined pillars of red and white marble lie scattered along the shore. For the prophecies of the destruction of Tyre, see—

Isaiah xxiii.; Ezek. xxvi., xxvii., xxviii.

Tyre yielded to Nebuchadnezzar B.C. 571, nineteen years after the prophecies against it. Like all the heathen cities, Tyre was wicked and proud. She had said, "I am perfect in beauty;" and her heart was lifted up because of her beauty.

Her magnificence has been brilliantly described by inspired and modern writers. "Those Phœnicians were the Englishmen of antiquity; yet they spoke a language not unlike the Hebrew, and had an Asiatic aspect. let us imagine these skilful and enterprising merchants, colonizers and brokers, dyers in purple, great ship-builders, vast cultivators of the fine and useful arts, building up for a thousand years a marvellous fabric of wealth and grandeur. Tyre and Sidon are their London and Liverpool; their kings have marble palaces ceiled with cedar; the temples of their gods are plated with gold; the shore is skirted with the noble mansions of their merchant-princes. And behold the Tyrian galleys: benches of box inlaid with ivory, flags of fine linen embroidered in scarlet and blue, and awnings of purple, made them "very glorious in the midst of the seas."

The Mediterranean is covered by their lofty ships of traffic: three hundred Phœnician colonies—Car-

Digitized by Google

thage at their head—depend for their supplies on the commerce which the mother-country draws to her ports of the wealth of all the eastern nations. It comes by multitudes of caravans through the deserts from afar. Tyre bears the treasures to Sicily and Italy and Spain, and by Gibraltar to the western shores of Europe; and their adventurous ships even reach Penzance to trade for tin. The jewels of Ceylon and of India are in these markets, the ebony and ivory of Ethiopia, the embroidered robes of Babylon, the sword-blades of Damascus, and blue mantles from the looms of Kedar.

The king of Tyre sits aloft "like a god in the midst of the seas," and he sees not that through the infinite villanies of his traffic he has incurred the wrath of the King of kings. Tyre and all her fleets are soon to burn like a mountain of cedars in the midst of the waters, and the sceptre of the seas will pass away to other men.

THE CITIES OF BASHAN.

The nations to which Jeremiah was the prophet—and a prophet of evil and curse, of "rooting up" and "pulling down"—lay all round the land of Bashan. Jephthah the Gileadite had dwelt among the mountains of Gilead, on the east of the Jordan. And how early was that fertile soil far-famed for its sovereign balm and spices! Did not the Ishmaelites, who carried away Joseph with them (Gen. xxxvii.), come from Gilead, with their camels bearing balm and myrrh, going down into Egypt?

Bashan was the land that the Lord had blessed.

Look back to the castle of Salcah (p. 61), and survey all eastern Palestine, with the help of the

Digitized by Google

small map on page 44, in which you will find all the names Jeremiah mentions in his 48th chapter. It is the land of the old stone cities, of which you have the stone door at page 181, and the description in our tenth chapter. Jeremiah utters his prophecies against all these—Moab and Ammon, Bethgamul and Kerioth and Kunuwat; which, while Nineveh, Tyre, and Babylon have passed away and are no more seen, still—YES, STILL, at the end of more than 2000 years—present their glorious massive ruins, the ruins of all intervening ages to the eye of the traveller,—temples, palaces, towers, columns, and tombs rising out of the foliage of the oaks of Bashan; while luxuriant creepers of each modern summer wreathe their capitals. A colossal head of Ashteroth, with the crescent moon upon her brow, takes us back at Kunuwat to the Ashteroth Karnaim (meaning two-horned) of Gen. xiv. 5.

We have yet to ascertain the meaning and see the fulfilment of Jeremiah's 31st chapter, where he says,—

"Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast.

"And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord."

How many cities in all parts of the world have been founded, destroyed, and founded again, and then a second time swept away, so that the very spot where they stood has long since been forgotten! But here, in this land, are memorials that have been suffered *to remain*, though for centuries hidden from the gaze of man; perhaps, it has been said, "in an-

Digitized by Google

ticipation of a day when men should begin to doubt the history recorded in Scripture, and when such doubt should increase into utter and wide-spreading infidelity: then, when most required as witnesses for the truth, these old places should be again brought to light by various travellers, to give a mighty though silent testimony to the minute accuracy of the Scriptures, which seventy years ago was neither known nor needed, as, alas! it is at present."

PETRA.

Next in order Jeremiah mentions Edom (chap. xlix.,) of which the southern capital is Petra.

When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem, the Edomites were almost as numerous as the Jews. Moses tells us (Gen. xxxvi. 1), that Esau is Edom. Esau had hated Jacob, and their children were always at enmity. The Edomites had united with Nebuchadnezzar to besiege Jerusalem, and urged him to raze it even with the ground (Psalm cxxxvii. 7.) The prophecies against Edom are very many, and are a continuation of God's wrath upon Amalek, which became the ascendant race and general name for all the children of Esau. These prophecies are distinct from those against Ishmael, whose children are spoken of as the tribes of Kedar and Nebaioth. On Esau, or Edom, the judgments pronounced are by far the most severe, and on his city, Petra, they were chiefly poured. Spoiler after spoiler ruined it. The people worshipped the sun and moon, and made their houses, palaces, and temples in the rocks and sides of the mountains which surround the valley in which Petra is situated. This wondrous city, with its rock-hewn pillars and statues of exquisite beauty, once the halting-place and mart of all the caravans of the wilderness, fell under the dominion of Jews, Greeks, Romans, and Arabs, till it became what it

Digitized by Google

now is,—"an utter desolation," "none passing through it for ever." For 1200 years its very existence was unknown: it is approached only through a narrow defile of rocks, two miles in length, through which but two horsemen can ride abreast, under festoons of climbing plants and trees. At the end of the defile, Petra, the dead city, bursts upon you, silent and beautiful in its desert tomb. For the prophecies against Edom see—

Jer. xxvii. 3—11; xlix. 7—22; Joel iii. 19.
Ezek. xxv. 12—14; xxxii. 29; Obad. ver. 1, 8, 9.

And that all these things were fulfilled before the time of Malachi, we know from Mal. 1. 2, 3.

THE JEWS.

Meanwhile what does Jeremiah say of his own people finally by the word of the Lord? See his fiftieth chapter.

"Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.

"Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria.

"And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead.

"In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve."

The two latter verses cannot yet be said to have been fulfilled. We have now brought the people to the point of their exile.

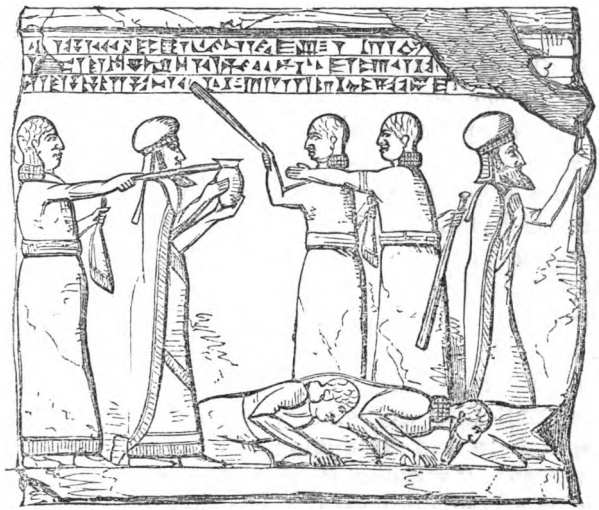
There is a touching picture of the sufferings of Israel in the Subterranean Hall of the British Museum, which certainly seems to give the figures of Jewish priests with the "linen bonnet" which Mr. Holman Hunt, the eminent modern painter of

Digitized by Google

Our Saviour in the Temple, has often noticed and remarked that he studied his picture from similar living models in Jerusalem. It is said in Exod. xxviii. 40, concerning the sons of Aaron—

"And bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty."

The edge of this "consecrated" bonnet appears to be jewelled; it is a "goodly bonnet of fine linen" (Exod. xxxix. 28); but the wearer in his



CAPTIVES TAKEN IN SUSIANA.

long robe is so emaciated that he seems nearly starved to death. The contrast between the stout arm of the captors and the thin, shrivelled limbs of the sufferers praying for quarter is indeed a "dumb stone crying out."

We know, from what is said of Daniel and Ezekiel, that, in the days of their exile, the people were not without their Scriptures. By the rivers of Babylon they sat down and wept; they wept when they remembered Zion.

Digitized by Google

On their return from their long captivity, and after they had rebuilt their temple, they having forgotten the Law, it was re-delivered to them by Ezra, of whom the Jews always speak as of a second Moses; and they say he lived, like Moses, for 120 years.

This forgetting of the Law, on the part of the people, argues, that the copies of it had been very scarce, and that it had not been publicly read to them all the while they were in Babylon; and yet, even there, Daniel, who wrote in kings' courts, and Ezekiel, on the river Chebar, in solitude, at thirty miles' distance from the city, had been inspired to add to the sacred writings two of the most wonderful of the prophetical books—bearing their own names.

At the appointed time, King Cyrus, having conquered Babylon, (according to the book of *Daniel,*) and being made to see, by that prophet, the prophecies that God had uttered concerning him, in the days of Hezekiah, as the deliverer of the Jews (Isa. xliv. 8), issued an edict, permitting them to return to Jerusalem.

You will find the history of their return in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Only the "remnant" of the nation returned; many, it seems, preferred staying in Babylon; vast numbers went to Egypt. A hundred thousand earnest men (perhaps scarcely so many, for Ezra speaks of the return only as "giving us a nail in the holy place") sought once more the land of their fathers. The journey occupied four months, and was accomplished in two bodies, or caravans. They still suffered great distress on their arrival, and did not for twenty years begin to rebuild their temple; and when it was completed, the elder Jews, who had seen the holy and beautiful house of Solomon, wept over this second temple in comparison with it,

Digitized by Google

for, alas! in this temple four things were wanting. There was no ark, no sacred fire on the altar, no answer by Urim and Thummim, no Shekinah or cloud of glory between the cherubim. Still they rejoiced in the re-establishment of the passover and the temple service; and under Nehemiah the city walls were rebuilt on the old foundations.

The republishing of the Law by Ezra did not take place till 80 years after the return of the first caravan of pilgrims from Babylon.

This we must reserve for our next and last chapter.

On the western frontiers of Media, and on the high road from Babylonia to the eastward, a rocky hill rises abruptly from the plain to the height of 1700 feet. It is not an isolated hill, but the face of the end of a range of hills. This hill has always been considered sacred. The Greeks say that a temple of Jupiter once stood upon it. The name Behistun is derived from Bagistane, or "The place of Baga" (*i.e.*, God).

In the year 1837, Colonel Rawlinson, then a young man, happened with his troop to be in the neighbourhood of this Rock of Behistun; and his attention was drawn, not for the first time, to the remarkable figures and inscriptions upon it, carved at an elevation of 500 feet from its base. Now he knew that the neighbouring Arabs spoke of these as the sculptures of Darius, and he remembered to have heard, when a boy at school, that some scholar in Germany had made out a name in some similar inscription: and this vague remembrance allured him onwards.

He soon observed enough to make out that the writings were in three languages, though in a similar character: a clue to the reason of which was afforded by the fact, that if a governor of Bagdad at the

Digitized by Google

present day wished to publish an edict for general information, he would be obliged still to employ three languages—the Persian, Turkish, and Arabic. In the ancient age the languages must have been Assyrian, Medean, and Persian.

The grand interest of this rock is, that after twenty years of toil with other learned students Sir Henry Rawlinson is convinced that these inscriptions contain the alphabets which alone unravel all the secrets of the Assyrian marbles.

He pronounces this rock a record made by the Darius Hystaspes mentioned in Ezra vi., and inscribed in the year previous to his ratification of the decree of Cyrus for rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem (521 B.C.)

It therefore comes in course as an illustration to our present period of Jewish history.

The frontispiece of the present chapter is THE ROCK of Behistun, which belongs to the era of Israel's return from the seventy years' captivity.

On this rock is written, according to Sir Henry Rawlinson's readings, what was the extent at that time of the mighty PERSIAN EMPIRE.

"Says Darius the king: I am the ninth of my race. By the grace of Ormuzd I have become king. Ormuzd has granted me the empire.

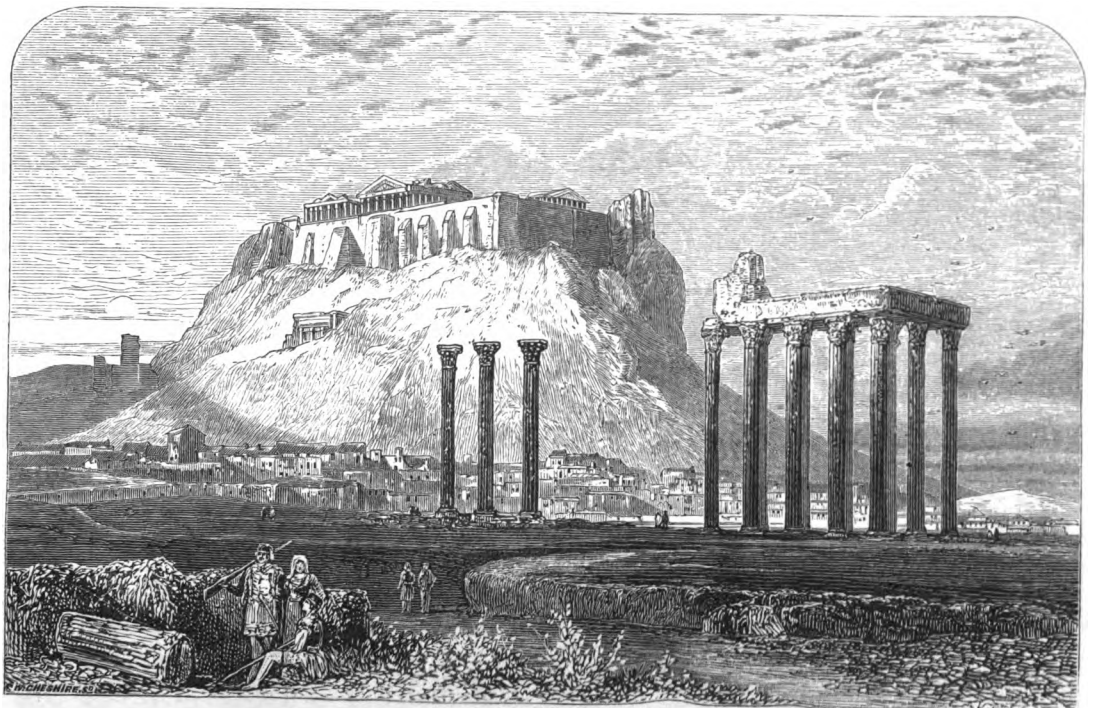
"Says Darius the king: These are the countries which have fallen into my hands by the grace of Ormuzd,—Persia, Susiana, Babylon, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, Sparta, Ionia, Armenia, Cappodocia, Parthia, Zarangia, Aria, Chorasmis, Bactria, Sogdiana, the Sacœ (Scythians, the Sattagydes, Arachteans, the Mœcians—being twenty-one countries.

"Says Darius the king: These countries have brought tribute to me; that which I have said to them by night and by day they have performed."

The AHASUERUS of the book of Esther is now considered to be XERXES, the son of this DARIUS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google



THE PARTHENON OF ATHENS.

Digitized by Google

THE PROPHETS OF THE CAPTIVITY,

AND THE

RETURN OF THE REMNANT.

No. XVIII.

It was only quite towards the close of Jeremiah's lengthened day that Ezekiel received his commission from heaven: and there was a wide difference of character between them. Jeremiah is gentle, calm, and tender in spirit; Ezekiel is full of consuming fire; he was the son of a priest, and was taken captive to Babylon eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem; he dwelt, with other Jewish exiles, on the Chebar, a stream of Babylonia.

Here God's message first reached him (Ezek. i. 3); although the Jews had a notion that the Divine Presence could not overshadow and inspire a prophet out of the Holy Land. He was called of God in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity.

Ezekiel was priest and prophet among his companions, a precious sign to them that God had not entirely forsaken them; his mission extended over twenty-two years (see chap. xxix. 17), during part of which Daniel was living, and already famous. Ezekiel's prophecies are wonderfully varied. They include instances of visions, chap. viii., xi.; symbolic actions, iv. 1—8; parables, chap. xvii.; proverbs, chap. xii., xviii.; poems, chap. xix.; allegories, chap. xxiii., xxiv. The Jews thought his prophecies obscure, and did not allow them to be read till the age of thirty; yet they placed him in the highest rank of prophets.

His book is divided into two great parts, of which the destruction of Jerusalem is the turning point.

Digitized by Google

His *first twenty-four* chapters are delivered *before* that event, and the remaining twenty-four after it; and the first thirty-two chapters chiefly deal in correction and reproof, while the rest are full of consolation and promise. There seems a parenthesis *in* the midst of the book (like Jeremiah's), from the xxv. to the xxxii. chapter, containing a group of prophecies against *seven* heathen nations, Ammon, Moab, and Edom, the Philistines and Phœnicians, also on Egypt and Persia, and in chap. xxxii. we are pointed to their "graves in the sides of the pit."

At Erech (or Warka) in Chaldea, the second city of Nimrod, the daughters of the famous ancient nations took their places alike literally and symbolically "in the sides of the pit," at the fall of their kingdoms. Here the dead were buried for more than 2000 years. Warka was a vast necropolis; all Lower Chaldea abounded in sepulchral cities of immense extent, but Warka seems to have been the most sacred. Sir Henry Rawlinson considers it to have been Ur of the Chaldees. Ezekiel's description is magnificent, and surely applies to it. *It* comprises all the sons of Noah; Shem's race are there in his posterity of Elam and Assur; all the children of Ham are there. Mr. Layard found some Egyptian remains in the Mound of Nimroud which he could not account for. Nor is the line of Japhet wanting, for there are Meshech and Tubal with all their multitudes.

"Asshur is there and all her company; his graves are about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword;

"There is Elam and all her multitude round about her grave.

"There is Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude. . . .

"There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes. . . .

"There be the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Zidonians." (Ezek. xxxii. 22—29.)

But the line of Arphaxad were not laid in that grave. In *their* great "valley of dry bones" the

Digitized by Google

same prophet (Ezek. xxxvii. 2) sees them lie *alone:*—

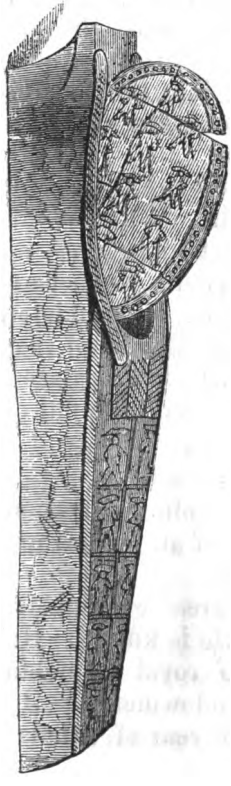
"Very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were dry.

"And God said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.

"Then He said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts.

"Therefore prophesy, and say unto them . . . Ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves."

"Ur," or "Hur," (the name found upon its cylinders,) or "Erech" means "the ark city." Its mounds are found to be composed of coffins, piled in layers of perhaps sixty feet in depth. From the foundation of Warka by Nimrod until it was finally abandoned by the Parthians, a period of probably two thousand five hundred years, it appears to have been a place of graves. The city cannot have been less than fifteen miles in circumference, and an unknown extent of desert beyond the walls is still filled with relics of the dead.



The Parthian coffins are shaped like a slipper. Hundreds are yearly broken up by the Arabs in search of gold and silver ornaments, and they bore through one coffin into another for this purpose. The small antique funeral lamp is often also carried off from vault or trench. One or two of these fragile coffins have, with great

Digitized by Google

care and pains, been brought to England, and may be seen in the Nineveh galleries of the British Museum.

They are glazed with a rich thick green enamel, and were only removed in safety by papering them within and without.

Into that deep abyss, that grave of nations, Ezekiel sees the giant form of the Assyrian empire hurled with a crash like some aged cedar of Lebanon. (Ezek. xxxi.) Here too, old Egypt, so famous for her august burials, was to descend, not into the deep repose of painted sepulchre, or of massive pyramid, but to be dragged like the dying crocodile of *her* own rivers (Jer. xlvi.), and cast out with the *un*-clean, blood-stained corpses of uncivilized races—the wild hordes of Northern Asia, into the promiscuous pit, and ere the funeral procession closed, it would include another mighty form.

Jeremiah had turned his prophetic eye to the fall of the all-conquering Babylon itself. Who has not heard of its brazen gates and its 676 squares, its walls and its hanging gardens, where Nebuchadnezzar said, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built?" Who does not remember the hand that wrote in fire on the walls of Belshazzar's palace? and having referred to the prophecies of the fall *of* this mighty empire in—

Isa. xiii.; xxi. 9; xlviii. 14—20; Jer. l.; li.

—you will be prepared to read the sublime narration of Daniel, who was the eye-witness of all its horrors, in the fifth chapter of his own book.

Daniel was the fourth of the greater prophets, but of his family and parentage little is known. He appears however to have been of royal or noble descent, and of great personal endowments. He was taken to Babylon in the third year of Jehoia-

Digitized by Google

chim, and trained for the king's service. Him also God called to be a prophet, and to interpret dreams, which lifted him into the position of "ruler of the whole province of Babylon;" and at the accession of DARIUS he was made first of "three presidents" of the empire. At the accession of CYRUS he still retained his prosperity, and beheld his last recorded vision on the banks of the Tigris.

During the Babylonian captivity, Daniel was inspired to give to the world two pictures of the further events that would occur in the 400 years which were to introduce the kingdom of the Messiah.

The figures which compose his first picture had previously been presented in a dream to the mind of Nebuchadnezzar himself; and Daniel was called upon to declare what the king had seen, and to explain its meaning.

Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his dream an image with a head of gold, its breast of silver, its middle of brass, and its legs of iron, the feet partly iron and partly clay, and he had seen a stone cut out without hands smiting this image on its feet, and breaking the whole fabric to pieces.

This dream Daniel was commissioned thus to explain. He told Nebuchadnezzar that he, the King of Babylon, was himself the head of gold; that after his kingdom should come three other kingdoms, each less glorious than his; and that all four should be destroyed by a greater kingdom than any of them,—the kingdom of the God of Heaven, which should last for ever. You must read the dream and its interpretation in the second and third chapters of the book of Daniel.

The prophet's second picture is contained in his seventh chapter; and it is a picture of the same

Digitized by Google

four great empires, but now represented under the form of four great beasts, who were also to succeed one another in dominion.

Further visions (in the eighth chapter) informed Daniel that the second kingdom was that of the Medes and Persians, the third that of the Grecians. The fourth empire is not named, but it is fully described, and events proved it to be the mighty power of Rome.

All ancient history confirms the truth of this magnificent prophecy. The Babylonian empire passed away, as we have seen, at the taking of Babylon by Cyrus: the Persian empire fell when Darius was conquered (B.C. 330) by Alexander, who is the leopard of the picture, with four heads; while the Grecian ceded to the Roman power about 150 years before Christ, which then began to eclipse all others, and having conquered Carthage soon became the sovereign of the world.

It principally concerns us to know what became of the Jews during this period. Among themselves the high-priests had the chief power. The sixth in succession from the time of their governor Nehemiah was Simon the Just: his most important work (according to tradition) was the final arrangement of the books of the Old Testament. He added to Ezra's collection the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi; and thus completed the canon of Scripture.

We must not forget to realize Ezra's ministry to the remnant that returned from Babylon.

EZRA'S MINISTRY.

Upwards of 50,000 of the people were assembled in Jerusalem, in the square of the water-gate—as many as were assembled in Trafalgar Square, in

Digitized by Google

London, at the funeral of the late Duke of Wellington.

A surging sea of human faces is always a grand sight. On the day that Ezra preached (and it was early in the morning of the Jewish Sabbath) 50,000 faces were upturned towards the pulpit of wood on which he stood, surrounded by thirteen more preachers on a platform or gallery—six on one side of him, and seven on the other. Thirteen other teachers seem to have been present on another platform, to read by turns, so that all the people might be addressed.

When Ezra ascended the pulpit and opened the roll of the Law, the whole congregation stood up: then he offered prayer and praise to God, the people bowing their heads and worshipping, with their faces to the ground; and at the close of the prayer, with uplifted hands they said, "Amen."

Then, all still standing, Ezra (assisted sometimes by the Levites) read the Law distinctly, gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading: a model of what preaching still should be.

The Law as delivered by Ezra so affected the hearers that they wept exceedingly, and about noon Ezra and Nehemiah thought fit to restrain it. From the great excitement they evinced, it would seem that the reading of their Scriptures in the language they understood (Chaldee) was a new thing to them. In the temple service it had no doubt been read in the sacred language (Hebrew).

On the second day the reading was resumed, they were again instructed in the Law; and they then appear to have arrived at the 31st chapter of Deuteronomy, when Moses commanded the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles, which they immediately prepared to obey. They gathered, as of old, branches

Digitized by Google

of palm-trees and willows of the brook, the pine, the myrtle, and the foliage of the Mount of Olives, to make booths; and there was very great gladness.

Under the shadow of these booths, for the space of seven days, they remembered all the toils of the wilderness; and day by day Ezra read to them in the books of the Law of God,—probably in *all* the books; for the Old Testament was now complete, with the exception of the history of the current times. Doubtless the *history* of the nation was read, and they were made to review God's dealings with them; very likely the *Psalms* were sung relating to the events which David and others had celebrated; and we cannot but believe that Ezra also pointed to the *Prophets*, and showed the people how minutely many of the words spoken by them had been fulfilled.

They knew that God's revelation was supported by the great pillars of miracle and prophecy; and at this era the common people under Ezra's teaching must have been taught to feel the strength of both. *They stood in the midst of the circle of doomed countries, on all of which the threats of their sacred writings had been fulfilled, as well as most bitterly upon themselves.*

Nineveh, Tyre, Petra, Thebes, and Babylon as well as Jerusalem, had all been desolated within the space of forty years by Nebuchadnezzar. Judgment had begun at the house of God, as it always does; and the divided kingdom of Israel had, as we have seen, fallen by the hand of the kings of Nineveh, 730 B.C.

How deeply the lesson of all these vast fulfilments of the Word of God was impressed upon the minds of the returned remnant of Judah, we may judge from the fact, which all history confirms, that they ever afterward felt a profound dread and aversion for all the Pagan idolatries.

Digitized by Google

Ezra did much to cut off idolatry at its root, by causing them to put away at once their heathen wives. This was a severe and terrible measure, and it grieved him deeply to enforce it (see Ezra ix. 10); but he felt it was essential to their future existence as a nation.

Haggai and Zechariah prophesied during the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem. They urge it on, and exhort the people to repentance; they herald the coming Messiah, the Prince of peace, whose appearance in the second temple was to be its chief glory. Zechariah extends his predictions to the Second Advent, as many of the prophets had been inspired to do before him (see chap. xiv. 1—11), and speaks of it as attended by the conversion of the nations.

Malachi prophecies against fresh corruptions introduced during Nehemiah's absence in Persia. He also predicts the Messiah. His last prophecy concerns the blessedness of those who fear the Lord; and his book closes the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures, 400 years before Christ.

While Nehemiah was governor of Judea the Jewess Esther was raised to the Persian throne; and with her beautiful history the records of the ancient world, as given to us in the Bible, are ended.

When we look back on the whole Story of the Divine Book, we see that it is a history of a *chosen* people taught of God, and chosen to serve HIM and Him *alone*—chosen from a larger human family who did NOT serve the true God, but served their own false memories of Him, and made images of gods to worship from their own vain imaginations. Their natural instinct bade them worship something better than themselves; but "their foolish heart

Digitized by Google

was darkened," and they set up as gods the symbols of their own worst vices.

These vile examples, as you have seen, God's chosen people, who possessed His Word, yet obstinately and strangely followed, and were in consequence rejected, abhorred, and cast away; *yet not for ever.* They still walk the earth in singular nationality: forgotten or persecuted, massacred or spared, they never die out.

Where is there a nation so old as this nation? With its cradle in remote antiquity, its history has bridged all these centuries; and across this bridge we of modern days alone communicate with ages long gone by. How is this? The Jew folds in his vesture his imperishable Book of the Law and the Prophets given him of God. Those inspired authorities have told his story; and even the science and literature of this advanced era must come to him and his old ancestral records when they would seek to illuminate the lately disinterred remains and monuments of the men that were his foes. Babylon and Assyria and Egypt are gone down into darkness —they have perished, but the Jew remaineth; for with him a faith has succeeded to a kingdom.

The book of Esther in our Scriptures may be looked upon as the link between the history of the scattered nation of the Jews and that of the Greeks, whose capital city ATHENS, forms the illustration to our last chapter. That beautiful daughter of Israel shared the Persian throne of Ahasuerus, who is now considered to be the same with Xerxes, the son of Darius Hystaspes who wrote on the Behistun rock.

Of this Persian king there had been a prophecy recorded in the book of Dan. xi. 2. It was uttered in the third year of Cyrus. (See Dan. x. 1.)

Digitized by Google

"And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia."

The three kings that stood up after Cyrus were Cambyses, Smerdis the Magian, and Darius of the rock inscription. Xerxes the son of the last, was the fourth king mentioned, and his invasion of Greece is the chief event of his reign. It was he "who stirred up all by his riches" against Greece.

Besides the Persians, superbly clad, with lances knobbed with gold and silver, he had in his army Ethiopians clothed in lion skins, Indians in cotton, wandering Scythians, and wild hunters, Medes and Bactrians, Lybians and Arabians.

When he reached the shore of the Hellespont he ascended a lofty marble throne and beheld at one view his fleet and army. At first the show delighted him, but he soon burst into tears, and when asked why—"Because," said he, "before the end of a hundred years all this vast multitude will have passed away."

After fierce battles and many losses, Xerxes did succeed in burning Athens—Athens, whose language and its poet Homer, could win the world's ear from then till now—but the Persian king did not conquer Greece.

As the empire of Judah sank below the horizon of nations, the Greek empire had risen; and ere the Son of God appeared upon the earth, according to the word of the prophets, the dominion of each of the four "beasts" of Daniel had been established; each for its "season and time," BABYLON, PERSIA, GREECE and ROME, had in turn succeeded each other, and even for the scattered Jews at Alexandria, it was found desirable to translate for the first time their ancient holy books: THE OLD TESTAMENT (as we call it) from Hebrew into Greek, the language of

Digitized by Google

Athens, in which the NEW TESTAMENT was *written* from the first. Thus the Word of God was *first* given to the Gentile world, whose "times" had been said to commence from the rise of the Babylonian power—Daniel's "head of gold."

Our British city of Edinburgh is called the "modern Athens" from some likeness in its site to that classic city. A magnificent rocky eminence in the centre of each, crowned with grand edifices, commands the surrounding country. Both cities are beside the sea. We shall have more to tell of Athens in the days of Paul. It was then the world's university of learning, but it reached *its* greatest splendour and power fifty years *after its* burning by Xerxes. It was then called THE CITY of all Greece.

And here we will part with our readers till we resume the Story of the Book as contained in the New Testament, and as it has gradually spread through the world.

The VERBAL CHRONOLOGY of the OLD TESTAMENT is not difficult to remember in a few great periods.

	YEARS.	
See p. 4—The World before the Flood	1656	
„ p. 5—After the Flood to Israel's Exodus when Moses was 80 years old ...	857	
„ p. 225—From the Exodus to the Foundation of Solomon's Temple, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign...	480	
From the Foundation of Solomon's Temple to Birth of Christ	1011	by common consent.
	4004	

On the 1st of January, 1869, will be resumed the issue of the NEW TESTAMENT Series of TRACTS and the Story of the circulation of Holy Scripture through the world—which together will form the entirely new edition of "THE BOOK AND ITS STORY."

Digitized by Google

INDEX.

Aaron, 102, 112, 113, 130, 151, 161, 162, 180, 183, 247, 251, 253, 267.
Abana, 45,
Abd-esh Shems, 70.
Abel, 6, 10, 12, 108.
Abiathar, 246
Abimelech, of Gerar, 94, 95,
Abimelech the Judge, 225, 227.
Abihu, 151.
Abishua, 156.
Abdon, 225.
Abraham, 9, 41, 55, 59, 65—68, 74—79, 92—95, 104, 148, 181, 217, 259, 300, 319, 330.
Abydos, Tablets, 82.
Abyssinia, 26.
Acacia, 109, 111, 129.
Accad, King of, 33,
Achan, 35, 208—213.
Acts of the Apostles, 160.
Adam, 2—12, 18, 47, 59, 61, 65, 79.
Admah, 50.
Adonai, 118.
Adoraim, 276.
Adullam, 254.
Africa, 62, 80, 84.
Agar, 107.
Age of Patriarchs, 4, 5.
Ahab, 278,
Ahaz, 288, 295, 299.
Ahaziah, 272.
Ahasuerus, 340.
Ahijah, 272
Aholiab, 178,
Ai, 213.
Ajalon, 200, 276.
Ain Howara, 119.
Ain-esh-Sheibah, 182.
Ain-el-Weibeh, 181.
Akaba, 177.
Alexandria, 157, 346.
Aleyat, 141.
Amalek, 130, 150.
Amalek, Graves of, 130.
Amunra, 275.
Amenophis, 111, 90.
Ammon, 276.
Ammonites, 74, 494, 258.
Amorite, 50, 73, 181, 186, 195, 216, 217.
Amos 186, 294, 329.
Amosis the Liberator, 98.
Anak, or Onk, 217.
Anakims, 67, 17, 185, 186, 216, 217.
Angel of the Way, 116.
Antichrist, 260.
Anu, 212.
Aperi-u, 99.
Apocryphal Books, 142, 157, 266.
Apollyon, 231.
Apostles, 19, 20, 263.
Arabia, 61, 80, 104, 107.
Arabia, Map of, 14; reference to, 61.
Arabs, 60, 343,
Arabian Frankincense, 109.
Arabian Nights, 193.
Arab Villages, 318, 329.
Aram, 45, 67, 68.
Aram—Naharaim, 66.
Araunah, 55, 267.
Ararat, Mount, 15, 16, 23, 145.
Araxes, 16.
Arba, 50, 217.
Argob, 187—190.
Ark, 16; Ark of God 38.

Digitized by Google

Armenia, 23, 24.
Arnon River, 186, 187.
Arphaxad 5, 52, 68, 343.
Arioch, 33.
Asa 277, 281.
Asaph 218, 258.
Ashdod, 217, 244, 331.
Asher, 96, 97, 221.
Ashtaroth, 222, 313.
Asnapper, 313.
Assheerah, 208, 211.
Asshur, 36, 39, 287, 290.
Asshur, Presence of, 209, 312, 343.
Asshur, Signet of, 209.
Assyria, 121, 172, 286, 290, 304—312, 319, 323, 343, 344.
Assyrian Chariots: 238.
Assyrian Demon, 231, 232.
Assyrian Helmet, 234.
Ashteroth Karnaim, 191.
Athor, 177, 179.
Athaliah, 282, 284.
Atonement, Day of, 252.
Ayun Mousa, 123.
Azal, 66.
Azariah, 276.

Baal, 208—211, 222, 228, 277, 296.
Baal-Peor, 184.
Baasha, 277.
Babylon, 27, 28, 40, 216, 240, 257, 298, 310, 338—348.
Babylon, King of, 287, 345.
Babylon, Captivity in, 337.
Babylonian Landmarks, 212.
Babylonish Garment, 35, 210, 213.
Babel, Tower of, 27—29.
Bagistane, 339.
Balak, 195.
Balaam, 195, 234
Barak, 223, 225.
Baruch, 323, 325.
Bashan, Giant Cities of, 73, 187, 191.
Bashemath, 75.
Bathsheba, 264.

Beasts, Symbolic, 321.
Beer, Professor, 135, 170.
Beersheba, 56, 74, 93, 122, 216.
Beke, Dr., 66.
Behistun, 339.
Bel, 232, 298.
Bel and the Dragon, 232.
Belka, 199.
Benjamin, 96, 97, 199, 223, 247, 274.
Beni Israel, 320.
Beni Sakk'r, 199.
Bethel, 46, 48, 56, 58, 95.
Bethlehem, 111, 119.
Bethhoron, 276.
Bethgamul, 191, 193, 334.
Beth-Shan, 276. 280.
Bible Chronology, 3—5, 82, 270,
Birs Nimrud, 27—29, 299.
Bishop's Bible, The, 201.
Bitter Well, 119.
Black Obelisk, 286.
Bochim, 221.
Books of Moses, 107, 152, 159, 172.
Book of the Law, 202, 264.
Boots turned up, 234.
Borsip, 28.
Bozrah, 191, 200.
Brazen Serpent, 168, 197.
British Museum, 37, 73, 86, 91, 99, 154, 210, 276, 299, 336, 344.
Bricks mixed with Straw, 99.
Buchanan, Dr., 154.
Bulls of Nimroud, 318.
Bull Apis, 114.
Burkhardt, 195.
Burning Bush, 110, 112, 117, 149.
Buz, Son of Nahor, 68.

Digitized by Google

Cain, 6, 8, 25.
Caleb, 132, 206.
Canaan, 46, 52, 67, 121, 163, 226, 252.
Canaanites, 156, 221, 247.
Captives taken in Susiana, 337.
Cap, Jewish, 287.
Carmel, 278, 283.
Carthage, 346.
Cedar, 317.
Ceylon, 332.
Chaldea, 26, 33, 45, 61, 77, 172.
Chaldeans, 68, 318, 347.
Champollion, 275.
Chariot-horses, 266.
Chebar, 322, 341.
Chedorlaomer, 181.
Cheops, 86.
Chephren, 86.
Cherubim, 19, 36, 37, 149, 164, 165, 209, 210.
Children of the East, 60.
China, 80, 320.
Christ, 251, 252.
Christians, Nestorian, 319.
Chronicles, Books of, 261.
Chronology, Hebrew, Samaritan, and Septuagint. See Hebrew Chronology, 159.
Clay Tablet, 28.
Cloudy Pillar, 164, 169.
Corn of Heaven, 117.
Cosmas, 135, 172.
Cranes, Red, 176.
Crocodiles, 114.
Crusaders, 216.
Cush, 26, 81.
Cylinder of Sennacherib, 309.
Cylinders of Tiglath Pileser, 293.
Cyrus, 324, 338, 345, 346.

Dagon, 230, 244.
Damascus, 45, 66, 93—291.
Dan, 66, 74, 94, 96, 97, 196, 216, 230, 244.
Daniel, 78, 233, 239, 301, 321, 322, 337—346.
Darius, 339, 340, 345.
David, 9, 59, 146, 220, 243, 246, 247, 253, 258, 260, 297.
David's Bible, 260.
Dead Sea, 59, 75, 186, 198, 199.
Deborah, 220, 223, 225, 227, 243.
Delta, 81.
Deluge, 35, 52, 90.
Dendera, Portico of, 87.
Desert, 63, 84, 109, 127, 146, 178, 189
Deuteronomy, 96, 161, 169, 187, 201, 202, 207, 325.
Divine Autograph, 164.
Division of English Bible, 201.
Doeg, 254.
Dress of Christian Women, 336.
Druses, 187, 193.

Ebal, 213, 215.
Eber, 64.
Ecclesiastes, 267.
Eden, 23, 72, 143, 163.
Edom, 67, 75, 77, 107, 121, 130, 178, 342.
Edomites, 258, 335.
Edrei, 188.
Egypt, 25, 26, 57, 70, 71, 73, 77, 81, 100, 113, 116, 149, 172, 198, 216, 252, 258, 338, 350.
Egyptian Hieroglyphics (as known to Israel), 179.
Egyptian Sandals, 98.
Egypt, Monuments of, 98.
Egyptian Papyri, 98.
Ehud, 225, 227.
Ekron, 331.
Elam, 342.

Digitized by Google

Elamites, 320.
Eleazer, 163, 202, 247.
Eldad and Medad, 139, 140.
Eli, 222, 224, 225, 227, 244, 253.
Elim, 126.
Elihu, 11, 67, 68.
Eliphaz, 67.
Elijah, 107, 277, 279, 302.
Elisha, 274, 281, 284.
Eliezer of Damascus, 48.
El-Lejah, 188.
El-Mukrah, 182.
El-Rahah, 133.
Elon, 225.
Emmaus, 227.
Emmishpat, 181.
England, 344.
Engedi, 190.
Early Engraving on Stone, 35.
Enims, 67, 194.
Enoch, 9, 10, 13, 18, 59, 65, 242, 277.
Enos, 7.
Ephraim, 96, 97, 197, 218, 221.
Erech, 34, 342, 343.
Ethan, 110.
Esau, 65, 67, 75, 76, 93, 335.
Esarhaddon, 313.
Esdraelon, 200, 215.
Esek, 95.
Es-Sham, 66.
Esther, 201, 261, 346, 349.
Ethan, 258.
Ethiopia, 69.
Euphrates, River, 15, 36, 45, 49, 54, 60, 74, 194, 196, 216, 266.
Eve, 6, 18, 47.
Exodus, 70, 83, 98, 101, 141, 149, 150, 167.
Ezekiel, 37, 78, 85, 127, 165, 190, 268, 301, 337, 341, 342, 343, 344.
Ezion-geber, 266.
Ezra, 257, 261, 320, 339, 346, 348, 349.

Familiar Spirits, 100.
Fetters, 305.
Fifth Commandment, 183.
Fig-tree, 111.
First Worker of Miracles, 103.
Flood, 15, 18, 83.
Flood, After the, 64.
Former Prophets, The, 227.
Forster, Rev. C., 137—139, 173, 176

Gad, 96, 191, 196, 242.
Galilee, 215.
Galatians, 54, 98, 107.
Gath, 217, 331.
Gathhepher, 291.
Gaza, 56, 217, 331.
Gebel Mousa, 109, 131—133, 137.
Genesis, 6, 51, 77, 96, 103.
Gentile Kingdoms, 321.
Gerizim, 50, 51, 53, 55, 56, 200, 214, 215.
Gershom, 104, 113.
Gezer, 265.
Ghizeh, 85, 86,
Ghozan, 194, 307.
Giants, 85, 186.
Gibeon, 276.
Gideon, 225, 227, 238.
Gilboa, 200.
Gilead, 50, 73, 200, 278.
Gilgal, 205, 206, 217, 246.
Goshen, 98.
Golden Calf, 153, 182.
Golden Cup, 236.
Gold Wedge or Tongue, 208, 211.
Goliath, 186, 254.
Gomorrah, 50, 69.
Graham, Mr., 73, 190, 193.
Grove of the Nations, 342—344.

Digitized by Google

Graves in the Wilderness, 161.
Grecians, 346.
Greeks, 216, 268, 339.
Greek Septuagint, 159, 241.
Greek Temples, 193, 196.
Groves, 208.

Habakkuk, 329.
Habor, 194, 307.
Hadramaut, 66.
Hagar, 72, 93, 94, 193.
Hagarenes, 72.
Hagarites, 60, 74.
Haggai, 349.
Halah, 194, 307.
Hall, Subterranean (Nineveh), 307.
Ham, 24, 25, 33, 52, 67, 81, 85, 115, 129, 145.
Hanameel, 325.
Hanani, 277.
Hannah, 243.
Haran, 21, 41, 46, 48, 93, 300.
Hauran, 190, 191.
Havilah, 65, 72.
Hazael, 282, 287, 288.
Hazermaveth, 65.
Hebrews, 83, 98, 98, 251, 347.
Hebrew Alphabet, 137.
Hebrew Manuscripts, 316.
Hebrew Scripture Chronology, 3, 4, 5, 224—227, 270, 280.
Hebrew Title Deeds, 95.
Hebrew Version of Scripture, 157, 158.
Hebron, 46, 60, 94, 108, 119, 199, 217, 220, 256.
Hilkiah, 155, 324.
Hermon, 74, 200.
Herodotus, 81.
Heth, 93, 95.
Hezekiah, 178, 276, 295, 299, 323.
Hiram, 267.
Hiskiah, 310.
Historical Books, 201.
Hittite, 75, 190.
Hivite, 75.
Hobab, 105.
Hook in the Nose, 311.
Horeb, 66, 132, 181, 283.
Hornet, 190.
Hosea, 85, 294, 295.
Huderah, 177.
Hugo, Cardinal, 201.
Huldah, 314, 324, 325.
Hunt, Mr. Holman, 336.
Hur, 343.
Husham, 75.

Ibis, 179.
Ibzan, 225.
Ichabod, 245.
Idolatry, 34, 70, 321.
India, 80, 333.
Indian Ocean, 61, 66, 265.
Ipsambul, 172.
Isaac, 2, 69, 55, 60, 72, 75, 92, 93, 95, 226, 243.
Isaiah, 62, 85, 100, 243, 281, 295, 299, 301, 313, 329.
Isfahan, 291.
Ishmael, 45, 49, 55, 60, 65, 72, 75, 76, 79, 187, 214.
Ishmaelites, 74, 75, 104, 333.
Israel, Tribes of, 96.
Issachar, 96, 97.

Jabbok, 50.
Jachin and Boaz, 317.
Jacob, 46, 56, 57, 65, 75, 92, 93, 104, 112, 179, 242.
Jacob's Well, 214.
Jair, 190, 225, 227.
Japhet, 24, 41, 145, 342.

Digitized by Google

Jebel Muthbah, 130.
Jebus, 220.
Jehoiakim, 316, 317, 321, 323.
Jehoram, 272.
Jehoshapat, 46, 277.
Jehovah Elohim, 10.
Jehu, 272, 273, 277.
Jehudi, 316.
Jepththah, 225, 226.
Jeremiah, 85, 142, 191, 193, 243, 248, 301, 323, 326, 329, 335, 336, 342.
Jeremiah's Fall of Babylon, 344.
Jericho, 198, 199, 207.
Jeroboam, 11, 55, 98, 269, 291, 293, 294.
Jerusalem, 53, 56, 107, 250, 258, 297, 320—328, 337, 341, 346, 349.
Jeshurun, 224.
Jesse, 258.
Jethro, 66, 104, 105, 106, 110, 130, 150, 224.
Jews, 233, 260, 268, 305, 336, 350.
Jewish Costume, 234.
Jewish Physiognomy, 307.
Jewish Priests, 336.
Jewish Prophets, 37.
Jewish Sabbath, 347.
Jezebel, 94, 211, 277.
Jezreel, 278.
Joash, 283, 284.
Job, 1, 11, 60, 61, 62, 65—70, 77, 78, 105, 106, 140, 260.
Jobab, 65.
Jobab, the son of Zerah, 75.
Joel, 301.
Jochebad, 2.
Joktan, 64, 79, 265.
Joktanites, 72.
Jonah, 284, 290—294.
Jonathan, 254—256, 326.
Joram, 284, 285.
Jordan, 46, 51, 58, 59, 69, 104, 191, 198, 199, 204, 205, 216.
Joseph, 56, 71, 73, 83, 92—98, 144, 179, 221.
Josephus, 48, 51, 314.
Joshua, 9, 74, 163, 190, 197, 201—217, 220, 227, 245, 252, 260.
Jubal, 7.
Judah, 96, 100, 155, 276—289.
Judah, Prince of, 274.
Judea, 215.
Judges, 219, 221—224.
Judith, 93.
Jupiter, Temple of, 339.
Josiah, 155, 324-5.
Jotham, 295, 299, 300.

Kadesh, 148, 181, 252.
Kahtan, 66, 79.
Karnak, 91, 92, 217, 275.
Kedar, 74, 335.
Keilah, 247.
Kerioth, 191, 192.
Keturah, 60, 73, 104.
Khorsabad, 310.
Khabour, 194.
Kibroth-hattaavah, 140, 172, 177, 184.
King who knew not Joseph, 98.
Kings, Table of the Jewish, 270, 280.
Kiriathaim, 191.
Kirjath-sepher, 216,
Kishon, 279.
Koran, 79.
Korah, Sons of, 258.
Koujunjik, 304, 308.
Kunuwat, 334.
Kurds, 320.

Lachish, 306.

Digitized by Google

Lahai-roi, 93.
Lamech, 7.
Layard, Mr. Austen, 37, 39, 194, 237, 286, 289, 292, 318, 342.
Laval, Lottin de, 173.
Law, 98, 141, 152, 155, 162, 167, 168, 243, 299, 347, 348, 350.
Lappets, 275, 306.
Lebanon, 200, 204, 331, 344.
Lepsius, 179.
Levi, 2, 6, 96, 103.
Levites, 155, 224, 246, 264, 347.
Leviticus, 161, 162, 166, 202, 250, 251, 252.
Leyden, Museum of, 99.
Lion and the Unicorn, 97.
Lobby Chamber in Museum, 307.
Lot, 47, 57, 74.

Maaseiah, 325.
Maccabees, 142.
Machpelah, 59, 60, 79, 95.
Mahar-shalal-hashbaz, 303.
Mahanaim, 276.
Malabar, 154.
Malachi, 142, 227, 346.
Mamre, 46, 48.
Manasseh, 3, 97, 106, 190, 191, 196, 213, 221, 313, 325.
Manna, 150, 168, 180, 206.
Marah, 126, 150.
Margoliouth, Dr., 140, 208.
Martyn, Henry, 80.
Mecca, 80.
Mediterranean Sea, 51, 58, 80, 200, 216, 332.
Medes, 194, 320, 346.
Megiddo, 276, 326.
Melchisedek, 52, 105, 278.
Memorial Stones, 205.
Memphis, 82, 85.
Menes, 81, 82.
Mercy Seat, 164.
Mesopotamia, 47, 48, 290.
Messiah, 52, 65, 150, 160, 345, 349.
Meshech, 342.
Mesha, 65.
Methusaleh, 2, 6, 13, 19.
Micah, 223, 230, 300, 325.
Micaiah, 279.
Midian, 66, 104, 129, 148.
Midianites, 60, 73, 104.
Milcah, 41, 67.
Mills, Rev. J., 156, 214.
Mingled People, 63.
Miriam, 178, 184, 243.
Mizraim, 81.
Mizpeh, 246, 327.
Moab, 7, 19, 45, 121, 129, 155, 191, 317, 334, 342.
Moabites, 74, 193, 194, 195, 258.
Mohammed, 79.
Mohammedan Hour of Prayer, 80.
Month Nisan, 116.
Moresby, Captain, 123.
Moreh, 46, 50,
Mosque of Omar, 220.
Moses, 1, 9, 40, 66, 67, 78, 79, 100, 101, 102, 104, 107, 108, 112, 119, 121, 130, 132, 140, 143, 144, 148, 150, 153, 163, 178, 184, 190, 197, 198, 206, 213, 242, 245, 252, 256, 258, 259, 260, 347, 335, 338.
Mount Ararat, 15.
Mount Ephraim, 223.
Mount Gerizim, 48, 55, 56.
Mount Hor, 162.
Mount Moriah, 220.
Mount Nebo, 191, 200.
Mount of Olives, 199, 294, 348.
Mount Seir, 67, 181.
Mount Sinai, 141, 145, 163.
Mount Paran, 134.

Digitized by Google

Mount St. Catherine, 137.
Mugeyer or Ur, Temple of, 30, 31, 34.
Mummies, 84, 153.
Mykerinus, King, 16. 154.

Nabatheans, 74, 135, 140, 172.
Nabo-Nidus, 31, 298.
Nablus, 46, 155, 156.
Naboth, 285.
Nadab and Abihu, 182.
Nafood, 63.
Nahor, 41, 47, 52, 67, 68.
Nahum, 239, 317, 329.
Naphtali, 96, 97, 200.
Nathan, 242, 258, 264.
Nebat, 272.
Nebaioth, 74, 75, 335.
Nebo the God, 298.
Nebuchadnezzar, 27, 28, 85, 154, 298, 312, 317, 327, 329, 330, 331, 344, 345, 348.
Nebuzaredan, 298.
Nehemiah, 201, 261, 339, 347, 346, 349.
New Testament, 277, 300.
Nebbi Yunus, 292.
Niebuhr, 173, 174.
Nejd, Lower, 63, 72.
Nejd, Upper, 63.
Nile, 49, 54, 58, 81, 82, 84, 114, 157, 177, 216.
Nimrod, 26, 31, 32, 35, 47, 81, 290, 342, 343.
Nimroud, 289, 294.
Nimroud, Gallery of Museum, 237.
Nineveh, 240, 286, 291, 292, 312, 318, 344, 348.
Nineveh, King of, 39, 289.
Nisroch, 312.
Noah, 6, 12, 24, 34, 47, 59, 78, 79, 108, 145, 242.
Nob, 246.
No-Ammon, 90.
Noph, 85, 342.
Nuhams, 174.
Number Seven, 6, 27, 48, 65, 95, 143, 342.
Numbers, 161, 169, 202.
Nyanza, 84.

Oannes, 231.
Oases, 63, 128.
Obadiah, 130.
Og the Giant, 74, 188, 190.
Old Testament, Books of, 153, 241, 346—349.
Old Testament Ladder, 262.
Oman, 63.
Omri, 273.
Ophir, 65, 68, 265,
Oppert, M., 28.
Orb and Wings, 87.
Osarken, 281.
Othniel, 225, 227.
Owls, 174.

Padan, Aram, 68.
Palestine, 45, 56, 58, 61, 84, 185, 216, 330.
Palestine, Eastern, 44, 45, 62, 104, 149, 162, 187, 191, 196, 214, 206.
Palm Groves, 128.
Palgrave, Mr., 63, 70, 72.
Papyrus, 153.
Paran, 72, 131.
Paris, 212. [206.
Passover, 40, 108—116, 150, 168,
Passover, The Great Last, 325.
Patriarchs, 263.
Patriarchal Times, 106.
Patriarchal Childhood, 166.
Patriarchal Life, Length of, 8.

Digitized by Google

Peleg, 52, 64.
Peniel, 95.
Pentateuch, 1, 2, 93.
Pentateuch, Oldest Copy of, 155.
Pentateuch, Samaritan, 155.
Persia, 31, 81, 340, 342, 346.
Perkins, Dr., 319.
Petra, 67, 107, 335, 336, 348.
Pentecost, Day of, 320.
Pharoah, 34, 57, 66, 82, 98, 99, 114, 143, 144, 163, 180, 265.
Pharoah's Daughter, 102.
Pharoah-Necho, 326.
Pharphar, 45.
Philip the Apostle, 160.
Philistines, 94, 95, 216, 230, 244, 247, 258, 342.
Phœnicians, 156, 216, 331, 342.
Phra, 82.
Phuloch, 294.
Piedmont, 319.
Pillar of Cloud, 186.
Pisgah, 162, 195.
Pithom, 83, 99.
Plagues of Egypt, 110, 150.
Porter Mr., 187, 188, 191, 192.
Portland, Duke of, 185.
Prayer Carpet, 80.
Presence of Assur, 38.
Presence of God, 109, 249, 251, 267, 297.
Primeval Kingdoms broken up, 328.
Prince of Peace, 349.
Prince of Wales, 46.
Professor Parrot, 96.
Promised Land. 200, 205.
Prophets, 241, 561, 262, 263, 266, 271, 280, 290, 300, 348.
Prophets of the Captivity, 441.
Psalms, 256, 260, 348.
Puah, 99.
Pul, 74, 294, 299.
Pyramid-Kings, 85.
Pyramid, 27,69,85,86,92,126,192.

Quails, 150, 175.

Rachel, 104.
Raguel, 150.
Ram, 67.
Ramah, 246, 252.
Rameses, 82, 91, 99, 102, 217,
Rawlinson, Sir Henry, 156, 287, 292, 298, 309, 339, 340, 342,
Rebekah, 75, 93.
Red Sea,61, 66,100, 104, 107,108, 132, 197, 204, 205, 243, 265.
Rehob, 276.
Rehoboam 269, 274.
Rehoboth, 95.
Rekshare, 99, 154.
Remnant, Return of the, 341,
Rephidim, 127, 129, 130, 131, 146, 150.
Reu, 52.
Renel, 75, 105.
Rephaim, 51, 67, 190—193, 216,
Reuben, 74, 96, 97, 191, 196.
Reubenites, 60, 74.
Revelation, Book of, 78, 121, 152, 161, 196, 221, 240,
Rezin, 295.
Robinson, Dr., 170, 182.
Rock-dwellings, 67,
Rock Records, 178.
Rock of Behistun, 339, 340.
Rod, 180.
Roll, 154—157.
Roll Case, 323.
Roll, The Burnt, 315,
Rome, Colosseum of, 193, 249, 250, 300.
Roman, 196, 216, 268.

Digitized by Google

Urim & Thummim, 246, 247, 339.
Uz, 66, 68, 105.
Uzziah, 294, 295, 299, 302.

Valley of Dry Bones, 343.
Valley of the Nile, 126.
Virgin Mary, 243.
Val-lush, or Pul, 294.

Wadis, 62.
Wady Aleyat, 133, 137, 147.
,, Arabah, 182.
,, Berah, 169, 170.
,, el Ahtha, 124.
,, Feiran, 128, 130—132, 137, 146.
,, Hebron, 132, 178.
,, Jerafah, 182.
,, Kurdhiyeh, 124.
,, Maghara, 137.
,, Mokatteb, 137, 176.
,, Mousa, 123.
,, Natel, 130.
,, Paran, 134.
,, Reiyaneh, 124.
,, Rimm, 147.
,, Shudh, 126.
,, Sudr, 124.
,, Tarawik, 122, 124.
,, Wardan, 124, 137.
War Chariots, Assyrian, 304.
Warka, 342, 343.
Whateley, Miss, 116, 123, 126.
Wilderness of Sin, 129.
Witch of Endor, 255.
Wizards, 100.

Xerxes, 29, 340, 351.

Yah, 70.
Yahveh, 118.
Yemen, 63, 66, 70.

Zafari, 66.
Zahraslat, 70.
Zarephath, 284.
Zeboim, 50.
Zebulun, 96, 97, 221, 291.
Zedekiah, 317.
Zephaniah, 329.
Zerah, 75, 281.
Zered, The Brook, 181, 186.
Zidon, 278.
Zidonians, 342.
Zion, 61, 257, 290, 299.
Zippor, 195.
Zipporah, 113.
Zoan, 100, 217.
Zoar, 50, 194, 200.
Zuzims, 67, 191, 194.

ERRATA.

Page 217, erase "Balaam the son of Beor had been slain in this war." (Josh. xiii. 22.)

Page 203, For "The giants Sihon and Og," read "king Sihon and the giant Og."

Digitized by Google