A SERMON,

ON

THE COMING OF CHRIST,

PREACHED AT THE

PARISH CHURCH OF ST. JOHN AND ST. MARY,

CARDIFF,

ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1832,

UPON THE SECOND LESSON FOR THE MORNING'S SERVICE,

AND PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CORPORATION.

BY

CALEB WHITEFOORD, M. A. F. R. A. S.

DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO THE MARQUESS OF BUTE, AND CHAPLAIN TO THE DUKE OF ROXBURGHE.

Cardiff:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY W. BIRD, DUKE-STREET;

AND TO BE HAD OF

MESSRS. LONGMAN & Co. PATERNOSTER-ROW, LONDON.

MDCCCXXXII.
Gentlemen,

A plain practical Discourse, without either learning or novelty to recommend it, is not likely to gain much by appearing in print; nevertheless, in deference to your judgment, I consign it to the press. Had it been a mere Literary Essay, I should have been better pleased (except in opposition to your wishes) to have withheld it, conscious of the defects which must accompany every thing from my pen. But when I look upon that which I have now the honor of submitting to you in its true, that is, in its spiritual light, I remember that the humblest means may, by God's grace, be instrumental to the best of ends. I have therefore no longer any will but that the seed may be sown, looking to Him for that increase, which is His own to bestow, and forms the minister's appropriate and highest reward on earth.
iv

But as an earnest that this occasional ministration of mine may not be without its fruit, I derive very great satisfaction from the personal compliment paid me in the publication of this Discourse; at the same time I am rather inclined to attribute such a gratifying result (under the Divine blessing) to the good ground upon which my seed had fallen, than to any efforts of an unworthy labourer in the Lord's vineyard, who now begs to subscribe himself,

Gentlemen,

Your respectful and obliged servant,

Caleb Whitefoord.
'The coming' thus indicated 'of the Son of God,' (for He alone appears to have termed Himself directly the Son of man) is subject to a double explication. In the first sense, as applied to our Saviour's auditory at the time, it had reference to His figurative appearance or 'coming' at the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, which he here foretold, together with many of its attendant circumstances, but which did not take place till about forty years afterwards. For those 'beginnings of sorrows' to His Church, Christ was anxious that it should be prepared; He accordingly vouchsafes the timely announcement and caution of my text; one, it is good to reflect, so duly appreciated by Christians of their day, that by comparison of 'the signs of the times' with His warning voice, they had left Judea and fled to the mountains before the Roman Eagles had gathered together round the devoted carcase of the Jewish
state; and thus were preserved from all that foreign and intestine strife, that extremity of want, and that desperation of resistance, which almost exterminated their countrymen, and 'made Jerusalem an heap of stones.'

In its second sense, the same expression of 'the coming of the Son of Man' looks through this former interpretation to Christ's more distant appearance at the end of the world, when He cometh again a second time "in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory" 'to judge both the quick and the dead.' Without attention to this blended signification and double accomplishment, we shall be unable to perceive fully the truth or appropriateness of either. We shall not understand how all that is particularized in this chapter can be brought to bear on the destruction of Jerusalem; nor how all that is proved to have been immediately applicable to the destruction of Jerusalem can be driven off for its solution to that great day when so many "hidden things shall be revealed." Whatever learned men may have thought, the arguments for this double interpretation seem too strong to be controvertible: admit it, and you are relieved from the necessity of regarding much of Christ's language as highly and unusually figurative, which you must do, limiting the sense to the former interpretation with respect to Jerusalem; whilst, on the other hand, those very figures of language, or rather the prefigurations they serve to convey, bear a close conformity to other predictions
(allowed to be such) of Christ's second coming. This we find by comparing the expressions before us with corresponding ones in both of the Epistles to the Thessalonians; and Christ Himself in the Revelations is represented, (chap. x. v. 15,) speaking of His second coming, just as it is spoken of here, "Behold I come as a thief: Blessed is he that watcheth."

Besides all this, we shall by an union of interpretations, account for that uncertainty as to "the day of the Lord" experienced by early Christians, and participated apparently by the Apostles themselves, since it is the nature of a double signification to be more obscure; we shall moreover reconcile the plainness and particularity of certain parts of this prophecy, and of Daniel's seventy weeks, to our Saviour's repeated declaration, that "of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the Angels of Heaven, but my Father only."

Nor am I able to see any valid objections to the notion of a primary and a secondary, or rather an interior sense in this case, since other prophecies in Scripture supply us with numerous instances to the same effect: thus, what is foretold of deliverance from Egypt, bespeaks, as it were esoterically, our freedom from the bondage of sin; what is predicted of the Land of Promise looks forward at the same time with the eye of inspiration to a Heavenly Canaan. The uses, that such repetition of the announcement, and anticipation of the event might
serving, are not difficult to discover. The mind of man was kept awake through a series of years to some far distant object by the intervention of another predicted personage or action; being an event upon which the mind could rest, and be carried onwards into the future, and which, however complete in itself, became the type or prognostic of whatsoever grand revelation remained to crown and to conclude the whole prophecy; a mutual confirmation is finally exchanged between the two subjects of prophecy, and reflected back on the Prophet or Prophets who foretold them; through all, leading the mind up to the wonders of inspiration and the glories of God's omniscience!

Having now, I trust, satisfactorily established the fact I desire, viz. the equal application of my text to this second sense of the coming of the Son of God, and premising that my remarks will be confined entirely to this, let us press on to practical views which may tend so much more to profit than the best of critical disquisitions. In seeking this end, I must necessarily consider the state of readiness or preparation demanded of us, as one to be provided against the hour of death, which to all intents, as far as we are concerned, seems equivalent to the coming of the Son of God at the last day. For it is evident the last day to be provided for by every man is that which terminates his mortal career: it is then the accounts of his past life are made up for the final settlement, and the period intervening between death and the
general judgment, however or wherever it be spent, cannot in the least affect an impending sentence, whether it be for good, whether it be for evil. We are to be ready then!—to be watchful,—to be prepared,—because we know the hour of death, bringing with it the day of judgment, to be altogether uncertain. Can it really be necessary to make the assertion? Fain would reason answer in the negative; but reason, combined with experience, is constrained to avow, that it is necessary to press upon man’s mind so familiar and universal a truth. It is not, however, a lesson met with in dry works of morality, and there only; surveying the present, or recalling the past, every day, every hour may convince us of it; happy, if the proof be not (in appearance at least) brought close for our inspection by some recent loss we have had to sustain,—a friend, a kinsman, some tender pledge which God but for a moment lent, or it may be the established partner of our bosom, for whom our wounds are still fresh. Death, the universal leveller—death will not be repulsed—no prayers nor tears will move him from his purpose—no artifice evade his pursuit, youth and its loveliness find no favour in his sight; yes, all must tread the appointed way of the dark valley—must descend to the narrow cell which encloses the hopes, the fears, the being of a world! Death is of all tyrants we know the most rash, and reckless of his force; for who can imagine that the sole victims of death are those who voluntarily submit to his stern fiat; who have tired of the dull round of mortality, the sicken-
ing vanity of all that life presents; those who are bowed with cares and infirmities, or longing for a release from the bonds of sickness or pain? Few indeed are those of whom it may be said they have gone down to the grave "as a shock of corn cometh in in his season;" many more whose dying voice would echo the words of the Patriarch, "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life!" Some we may remember in our own experience cut short in the bloom of health and earthly prosperity; none could suspect the near approach of the King of Terrors, their sole warning being those unremembered words of the Son of God, "that he cometh at an hour when ye think not!" Others, possibly, called off from ties which but a few hours previous had begun to form the delight of their existence; some in the hours of forgetfulness and slumber; some, alas! for them, in the hours of drunkenness and revellings; but how few of these can we look back upon as having been ready for their great change. There are not even wanting well-attested cases of men who with mouths full of cursing and bitterness, whilst loudly invoking the Divine vengeance on their own persons, or the persons of others in the current blasphemy of the day, have been summoned to an immediate account. What sort of preparations was theirs? Death it seems will stand no man's friend who is not the friend of God.

Yet the children of this world, wise in their generation, can compute to a nicety the chances of life
and death alike in young or old, and make their knowledge of goodly account as far as this world is concerned; so that it may seem strange I should consider the uncertainty of life as a very disregarded fact; but in truth, unaccountable as it may appear, the fact is for the most part practically confined to that sphere, and to those calculations where the advantages of knowing it are present, and palpable and gratify the lust of gold; for 'as children of light,' men have neither sense to discern the hazardous of propinquity of death, nor to turn that uncertainty (as the text proves to have been intended) to the certain and inestimable benefit of their souls. Thus when death surprises a victim, it is not uncommonly before he has ever seriously reflected that he might be so surprised, and then where is his preparation? nay, how few among professed Christians can reply to the invitation, that they are ready. Like the ungrateful guests of the Parable, one set have bought, or acquired by birth or otherwise a piece of ground, to which they have devoted time and attention till now, and therefore are not ready, and would fain have themselves excused till less engaged; honors, and pleasures, and learned or active engagements come forward with the same plea:—another set have in our estimation a more amiable excuse, they have married a wife—they are over-weeningly attached to their families, and therefore cannot come:—another humbler set have placed their interest exclusively in flocks and herds, their business or servitude. All, in short, are ready, but it is with some vain
excuse upon their lips for being disqualified for the coming of the Son of God. All, that is, loving and "serving the Creature more than the Creator," all neglecting the Lord's warning, all unfit to die! "For as in the days of Noe that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be!"

Now whence comes it, that false security, this blindness to the future, this clinging to the present among men calling themselves Christians, and expecting a Christian's punishment or rewards? Whence? but from want of habitually 'pondering in the heart' the fearful uncertainty of life, the certainty of death; and in some cases I doubt not God makes this a judicial blindness upon the persevering carelessness of mankind. For, on the other hand, surely all do not consider themselves prepared? This were a degree of assurance to which but the best of God's people can be entitled; certainly not the greater part even of professed Christians; far from this, the majority would stand self convicted whenever they put the question home to their consciences. No one living in the habitual commission of any known sin, no one living in the habitual neglect of any known duty, can be fit to die. And are not the sinful and scarcely-avoidable stains of our every day converse with the world, sufficient to make us dread the eye of the recording Angel and the final audit
of our Judge? What a long course of active devotion to God's service does it imply, what self-subjection, what an absence of self-reproach, to feel like the Apostle, "that it is better to depart and be with Christ!"—Is it then the portion of many to say so? Far be the presumptuous thought from our hearts! No!—wisely are we instructed in the Litany to entreat deliverance not only from 'plague, pestilence, and famine,' but also from 'sudden death:' not because there is any thing more terrible in sudden death, considered with reference to the body, than in more protracted dissolution; quite on the contrary, for are we not spared many cruel things by the former, the bedings of anticipation, the heart-wrung farewell, the last hard struggles of parting life? Compared with these, how desirable it would be to have the line of life severed abruptly and almost without our consciousness;—it would, but for one thing, and that is our common presentiment, (common to those who are Christians and to those who are not) of a hereafter. Oh! could we divest ourselves of fear respecting this eternal future,—could we but persuade ourselves we are in a state of preparation, i. e. of acceptance with God, sudden death would be an enviable thing!

But on the whole the compilers of our admirable Liturgy, seeing that mankind were ever unprepared to meet their God, and never willing to make the season of health and strength the season of repentance and preparation, have thence concluded that
sudden death was greatly to be deprecated, and the most lingering torments of disease to be preferred, if they might but bring us to penitence and self-examination. The near approach of death and judgment must indeed (if any thing will) rouse men to a knowledge of themselves and of their destiny: thus in fact, we find upon the bed of sickness good resolutions formed, bad habits renounced, solemn covenants entered into with conscience for the rest of life to be dedicated to God, "if He will, say they, spare me a little that I may recover my strength, (i. e. that I may be better prepared) before I go hence and be no more seen." But not so is the result—for one true convert made in this manner, numbers deceive themselves and fall away, recovering from sickness, relapsing into sin; fancying because the outstretched arm is withdrawn for a season, that it never in reality was shaken at them; too soon forgetting how quickly it may be brought back, whilst they cry, "let us eat and drink,"—not because they dream that "to-morrow we die,"—but because they think "to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." (Is. lvi. 12.) Thenceforth they adopt the language of the rich man in the Parable, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;" without taking the slightest heed of what the Lord answered him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!"

No spectacle more sad than a man going out of
the world unexpectedly, having had such designs in his breast;—none so cheering, so exalted, as to 'see with what peace a Christian can die.' With respect to the latter, there is no better encouragement or comment on a Christian life, than its crowning testimony at the last hour. Nothing more indisputable than the support and consolation a Christian derives whilst hanging on the dark and dizzy ledge between this world and the next,—the boundaries of eternity. It is neither a lethargic placidity, nor a transient burst of extravagance with which he meets death;—no, it is mostly with a quickened perception of another world, that the faithful Christian takes his leave of this, 'without fear or amazement,' grounded in hope, rooted in faith, casting all his care upon God, for he knows that God careth for him, and catching sometimes it may be divine glimpses of things that pass man's understanding, 'which God has prepared in Heaven for them that love Him.' (1 Cor. ii. 9.)

But as to the former, the wretch cut off in the habit, and, if in the habit, perhaps in the very act of sin,—what a state of mind has been his at the closing scene of life! Yet even the woes of that dread hour are swallowed up in the more dreadful anticipation that remains. With what countenance shall he meet his Judge? How shall he evade, appease, or mitigate his wrath? Having spent the time of probation here upon earth partly in resolved oblivion of his duty, partly in rebellion and direct insults
against his Creator and His most righteous laws, he has terminated an ungodly career, true, but not by his good will, simply because stopped short by death he could carry it on no longer; and here he stands before the tribunal of his God with a conscience, I do not suppose rendered more sensible of guilt than it was during lifetime, but one, now at length forced to think seriously, which therefore sees guilt, particularly its own guilt, in a far different light than heretofore—one brought, alas, only when it is too late, to cry 'mercy, mercy!' God forbid, that limits should be placed to the atoning blood of Christ, especially by His ministers; but take such a case as I have described, and say, would it be justice to forgive? Will men never learn, that if God is a God of mercy, He is likewise a God of justice; and that, of the two, it is easier to conceive Him in some degree unmerciful than in any degree unjust? What then can the utmost Christian charity predicate in such a case? If there is a sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," is there not likewise a sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "Therefore, dear Brethren, knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men!"—knowing that our time is short here below, we exhort you, saying, "to-day, while it is called to-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts:"—knowing that the stroke of death may overtake us in an instant, once more we premonish you, "Be ye also ready,
for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh!"

In the last place, to trust to the hopes of a death-bed repentance, is to lean upon a broken reed: the man who feels unwilling or unable to turn and prepare himself, whilst strength, and leisure, and freedom from bodily pain and other cares, gave him every advantage, must not look upon it as an easy thing to patch up a peace with God and his conscience, when every circumstance of his position is against him, and all combine to distract his thoughts, to deaden his sense, enfeeble his powers, and embitter his recollection. Good God, the chaos of that blindly-attempted reconciliation with Thee, at the last troubled moments of a bad man's life, must bear no vastly disproportionate resemblance to the eternal torments which are to follow! Never, we repeat, dare we close the portals of Divine love upon any returning sinner; but never, never may we hold out one single delusive hope to the hardened projector of a death-bed repentance.

Before I come to a conclusion, I would just for a moment observe, that if meditations like the present, and the preparation to which they lead, are of importance to us at all times, they become infinitely more so when we believe the Almighty to be in the way of judgment. If we did once hope to wipe away the arrears of a mis-spent life, with some scant remainder of penitence and prayer, driven
off to the last extremities, now at length, this vain confidence wherein we trusted is torn away from us. The chances of a late reparation, are no longer the same; few as they ever were, they have become much less. For some time past we have been taking a severe lesson on the uncertainty of human life, it may have brought some of us to a persuasion of the unwelcome truth: and now what, I beseech you, is the effective preparation you can make in the pauses left between the strokes of a brief but most active minister of fate. When Pestilence is on the wind, fatal beyond precedent in the memory of man—whose torture never spares its victim till consciousness and all is over. When Death makes no slow advances; nay, gives not one moment for recollection; sudden, quick, irresistible; like this, the coming of the Son of God was aptly betokened by "the lightning which cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west."

Surely, if men ever had a design to make their peace with God through Jesus Christ, they would not lose a moment in doing so now. All that everyone would be most anxious to perform, did he assuredly know that Death had marked him out for his next victim; all the unsparing examination of his own bosom,—all the self upbraidings for sin, that setting of his "sin ever before him," that he might for ever put it away,—all the earnest prayer without ceasing for grace,—all that renunciation of the world, and of himself,—that fleeing to Christ as the only
means of salvation;—this would be thought of and done at once, while "the evil day comes not!"—Men would go home this day and betake themselves to repentance, and faith, and calling upon God; pleading the effectual blood-shedding of Christ for the remission of their past sins, and striving henceforth manfully, with prayers for the assistance of God's good Spirit, "to work out their salvation with fear and trembling." "Do this," dear brethren, "and ye shall live;" (Luke x. 28.) "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord!"—"This do, and your souls shall live," (Isa. lv. 3.) "he that believeth on me," saith the Lord, "though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die:"

This is a cure for pestilence as well as a remedy for sin:—this do, and ye shall never fear death;—this do,—and ye shall be ready for the coming of the Son of God; "Yea, blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing!"
REMARKS

ON THE

Double Interpretation of the "Coming of the Son of Man," referring in a former sense to the destruction of Jerusalem; in the latter to the general judgment.

MAT. xxiv. MARK xiii. LUKE xvii.

FIRST INTERPRETATION.

JOSEPHUS, a cotemporary Jewish Historian, (and no Christian Writer) informs us (de Bell. Jud. Cap. 19. Lib. 2,) that when Cestius Gallus came with his army against Jerusalem, many fled from the city, as from a sinking ship;—and when Vespasian was afterwards drawing his forces together against the same place, a multitude fled (εἰς τὴν ὀρείνην) into the mountains. It appearing providentially ordered, that both these armies should put back after commencing their march, to give confirmation to our Saviour's warning, and facilitate the escape of the Christians; so that we do not read of one that perished during this cruel siege. Yet had they been unmindful of our Lord's warning, it would have been impossible for them to have so escaped, for the Romans did literally "cast a trench about the city, and compassed it round (with a wall) and kept it in on every side;" and the numbers computed to have perished amount to 1,100,000; besides those slain in other parts of Judea: some considerable portion no doubt, victims of that system of terror and the famine which were raging within, whilst the enemy stormed without. Another remarkable circumstance connected with this siege, is, that the Roman General was really desirous of preserving the city, and gave orders to that effect; nevertheless, it fell a sacrifice to the flames, partly at the hands of the enemy, partly by the besieged, partly by design, partly by accident, that is to say, humanly speaking, or, as Christians regard its fall, "according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." That it was so, Titus declared his
belief, upon finding himself so speedily master of the place which appeared almost inexpugnable, in an expression singular enough for a Heathen Conqueror, "truly," said he, "we have fought with God on our side." (Joseph. Bk. VI. c. 9.)

The whole prophecy, taking its rise from the admiration expressed by the Disciples for the building of the Temple; led first to this reply from our Saviour, "See ye not all these things? verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another which shall not be cast down," and thus we read in the same Historian, that Titus, after taking the now ruined city, ordered it all to be pulled down and rooted out, (κατασκατανίω, &c. Joseph. de Bell. Jud. Lib. 7, c. 7,) and other Authors relate, how that Terentius Rufus, subsequently ordered the very foundations to be ploughed up. So minute and memorable was the manner in which this great prophecy was fulfilled. Bishop Newton, from whose works these remarks are abridged, says of it, "that it appears next to impossible, that any man should duly consider this prophecy, and the exact completion of it, and if he is a believer, not be confirmed in the faith; or if he is an infidel not be converted." (Newton on the Prophecies, Vol. II. p. 327.)

It would be beyond my present limits to do more than mention here, the attempt of Julian the Apostate, in the middle of the fourth century, to restore the Jewish nation and Jerusalem, in order, as he impiously deemed, to refute that part of our Saviour's Prophecy, recorded by St. Luke, (xxi. 24.) that "Jerusalem should be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled;" everyone has heard how his object was miraculously defeated, and himself eventually signally overthrown and slain.

SECOND INTERPRETATION.

After these few observations on the first application and fulfilment of "the coming of the Son of Man," it is desirable I should, without suffering myself to be led into any length of discussion, make a few remarks on the second: particularly as no less learned
a scholar than Bishop Warburton seems of opinion, that no allu-
sion to the end of the world, or the general judgment was intended
by these prophecies. (Vide his Julian, Bk. I. c. 1.) Bishop New-
ton from quoting this opinion in his third Dissertation, (page 285,)
on these Prophecies, and the expressions he there uses, seems to
have been inclined to assent, but further on in his fourth Disser-
tation, (page 294,) he completely enters into the view of a sec-
dary and internal signification. Probably, therefore, he might
lean to the opinion of certain of the Fathers, for a distinct division
of the prophecy into parts, which I shall presently notice. The
opinion of the church in all ages has been much divided upon
this topic, an account of which I shall borrow as I find it in
Calmet's Bible.

1st Opinion—that the 'coming' referred to the
final judgment solely.

2nd .......... that it referred to the destruction
of Jerusalem, and establishment of
Christianity solely.

3rd .......... that the Prophecy was to be di-
vided at verse 23rd, the part before
that, to bear the first, the part after
that to bear the second interpretation

4th .......... a double application, partly inter-
weaved the one with the other.

Irenaeus. Hilary.
Gregory. Ambrose.

Grotius. Hammond.
Lightfoot. Warburton.

Chrysostom. Theophylact.
Euthymus. Bp. Newton (?)

Augustine. Jerome.
Bede.
Calmet.

We cannot but observe, that all these differences of opinion
tend to one point, viz. "the times and the seasons, which the
Father hath put in his own power," no doubt, for some wise pur-
pose of exercising the watchfulness and quickening the deligence
both of former and latter times.

1st Op.—In reviewing the first opinion, it is out of my power
at the present time, to enter into the causes which induced the
earliest Fathers to entertain it. We must however remember, that
the inferior event is generally swallowed up in the greater; and then, the general judgment having been looked for by the Primitive Christians simultaneously with the destruction of Jerusalem, (Mat. xxiv. 3.—2 Thes. ii. 2, &c.) owing to this very mixture of the events in the prophecy, and not having taken place then as these Fathers were living proofs, they concluded (perceiving only the unity of the prophecy, and its positive indication of a final judgment,) that it had been altogether antedated, and must altogether be postponed to the consummation of all things.

2nd Op.—The many ages that intervened having put the singular condition of the Jews in a much more forcible light, and made men better acquainted with their history, as well as with the use of comparing Scripture with itself;—and on the other hand, the period for God's judgment upon the whole world being no longer considered so imminent; the very reverse of the former view became the one now adopted, and all the prediction was narrowed and shut up within the boundaries of the siege of Jerusalem, whilst whatever difficulties this interpretation might lay itself open to, were disposed of by calling in the aid of strong figurative language to explain them away. The advantages of this second interpretation, backed though it be by names so transcendently great, are what I am at a loss to perceive. What I have to urge against it is, first, that although, by the admission of figurative language, the siege of Jerusalem might be made to cover the whole of the latitude of this prophecy, yet nevertheless we have no right to restrict it to one sense, if the terms employed apparently point to something further, considering that the merest tyro in Biblical knowledge is aware of the double meaning which prevails in many important parts of Scripture. Two instances have been given in the body of the Sermon, one, of the promises of deliverance from Egypt, being indicative of the deliverance of God's people from the bondage of sin and Satan; another, of the land of promise, being typical of the Heavenly Canaan. But is there not 'the seed according to promise,' having reference to the 'promised seed?' And is there no future prophetic and symbolical allusion, when Abraham replies to his son upon Mount
Moriah, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering?" Perhaps it is needless to multiply instances of so indisputable a fact, as the prevalence of this double application, but we will conclude with one which bears immediately upon the question before us. It will be admitted that the restoration of Jerusalem, the new, the heavenly Jerusalem, is emblematic of the glorified state of Christ's elect, the Church Triumphant at the end of the world; can we not by parity of reasoning, perceive how the destruction of the temporal Jerusalem may typically apply to the destruction of the world at the last day, which has endured so long in a state of enmity against God?

And this brings me to a second argument against limiting the interpretation to one sense, viz. that the expressions used in this text (Mat. xxiv. 44,) exactly correspond with others where there can be no doubt, but the 'second coming' of Christ is implied. I would refer to the book of Revelations, written after the first event, that is, the destruction of Jerusalem; and which could therefore apply to none other but Christ's coming the second time the following passage already cited, (xvi. 15.) "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth." (Compare Mat. xxiv. 42, 43, 44,) "Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."—The expressions are so exceedingly similar, as to leave no doubt of their applying to the same event, that is, to the second coming of Christ. The same image to convey the suddenness and stealth of Christ's coming, is current through the Epistles in the 1 Thes. ii. 2, 4.—2 Pet. iii. 10.—Again in ver. 31 of this chapter (Mat. xxiv.) it is written, "He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather his elect from the four winds:"—now compare this with the 4th chap. Thessalonians, St. Paul confessedly treating of the end of all things; in the 15th and 16th verses, there are the same expressions, "the coming of the Lord," "the voice of the
archangel, and the trump of God," and the elect meeting the
Lord upon "the clouds of Heaven." 'The trumpet' is again
significant of the final resurrection at Christ's 'coming' in the 1st
Epistle to the Corinthians, 15th chapter. In verse 28, amongst
'the signs in Heaven,' are enumerated that "the sun shall be
darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, the stars shall
fall from Heaven, and the powers of the Heavens shall be shaken."
And thus in the Revelation of St. John, describing the last judg-
ment, he proclaims, (chap. vi. ver. 12, 13.) "that the sun (in his
vision) became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as
blood; and the stars of Heaven fell unto the earth, whilst men
called on the rocks and hills to fall on them." Again, with how
much more propriety is the preaching of the Gospel to all nations,
(14th ver.—compare Rev. ix. 6,) and the gathering of the elect,
(31st of the same chap. of St. Mat.) applied to the consummation
of all things, than to the destruction of Jerusalem.

These coincidences cannot fail to strike every mind, and two
more reasons will suffice to fix us in the opinion of this double
interpretation, in preference to confining the prophecy to the one
view of the destruction of Jerusalem. First, Our Lord is answer-
ing his Disciples when he delivers the Prophecy: and what was
the question? a mixed question relating to the two events, the
destruction of the temple and the final judgment, "Tell us, when
these things shall be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming,
and of the end of the world?" (συνῆλθεν τῷ αἰῶνι.) Our Lord
naturally returns a mixed answer, and to shew that the answer
was mixed with relation to both events, gives them very plain
indications of the time of visitation upon the city of their Fathers,
but at the same time declares "of that day and hour knoweth no
man, not the angels of Heaven, but my Father only!" Secondly,
by admitting the double meaning, you clear up the fact of the
uncertainty that prevailed amongst the Primitive Christians, about
"the coming of the Son of Man:" they evidently, looking at this
Prophecy, considered the consummation of all things to be at
hand, although there appears no good reason out of the Pro-
phesy why the destruction of Jerusalem should involve the destruc-
tion of the world. St. Paul attacks this notion of an approaching judgment in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, but some critics have thought that the idea was favoured by the general current of the Epistles; nor does it appear wonderful that the Apostles should have been allowed tacitly to permit a belief which our Lord, no doubt for the wisest of purposes, did not provide against in the original Prophecy. There never has been a period in which it was not necessary to add motives to quicken man's piety, to exercise his watchfulness, to enforce his preparation.

3rd Op.—Having now finished my remarks on the second Opinion concerning this expression of "the coming of the Son of Man," by which it was limited to the destruction of Jerusalem;—and having offered, I trust, conclusive reasons for holding to the last Opinion, as it forms an united prophecy of Christ's first and second coming which are here partly distinct, partly involved;—it only remains, that I notice the third Opinion enumerated, viz. that the prophecies are divided at the 23rd verse of the chapter; this not differing much from the opinion I have adopted, it is needless to spend much time in discussing it; it is indeed essentially the same, the strongest argument against it being, that after this supposed division comes the whole limitation of the time clearly belonging to the first fulfilment, from verse 32 to 34, "Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." The coming of the Son of Man therefore is a double Prophecy, the descriptions of the two events being interwoven, viz. the destruction of Jerusalem, the destruction of the world, the former being typical of the latter. As our Saviour expresses it, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!"

Having fallen upon a disputed exposition of part of my text, I thought it necessary in these remarks, to subjoin my reasons for the one I have supported, which I trust, will not be found altogether destitute of interest or profit.

W. BIRD, PRINTER, CARDIFF.