

N O T E S

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O N

SCRIPTURE-TEXTS.

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N U M B E R IV.

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Urim and Thummim.

The Truth of the Scriptures.
The Conversion of the *Jews*.
The Kingdom of Christ in the
World.

By J O H N G L A S.

*Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever, Psal. xciii. 5.
Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar, Prov. xxx. 6.*

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NOTES

O N

SCRIPTURE-TEXTS.

NUMBER IV.

The Beginning of the Gospel.

MARK i. 1. 2. 3. 4.

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God, as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

THE Gospel is the good News of the Fulfilment of Old Testament Prophecy in Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God.

This had its Beginning in the Ministry of John Baptist, (*Acts* i. 22.), whose Work it was to make him manifest to Israel, as the Messiah, and as the Son of God, actually come according to the Prophecies. And this was more than all the Prophets that were before him could do, *Matt.* xi. 11. 12. 13. This Beginning of the Gospel was also foretold by the Prophets in the Words here cited by the Evangelist. By the Prophecies here applied to John Baptist's Ministry, it appears, that the Person before whose Face he was sent to prepare his Way, is *Jehovah*, who was to come into his temple, *Mal.* iii. 1.; *Adonai Jehovah*, who was to feed his flock as a shepherd, *Is.* xl. 3. 10. 11. with *John* chap. x. And so John came, according to these Prophecies, that he should be made manifest as the Son of God. See *John* i. 30.—34. Jesus was manifested to be the Son of God when he was baptized of John, by the visible Descent

of the *Holy Ghost* upon him, and by the *Father's* Voice from Heaven, testifying, *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,* v. 9. 10. 11.

He comes to *John's* Baptism with this Profession, *Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness,* Matth. iii. 15. In this his Undertaking the *Father* declares himself *well pleased,* because he is his *beloved Son.* And the *Holy Ghost* appears as descending and abiding on the *Man Christ Jesus,* to furnish the human Nature of the *Son of God* for the Performance of that great Undertaking; for he offered himself, *without spot, through that eternal Spirit.* When *Jesus* undertakes to fulfil all Righteousness, (being made under the law, and having come, *not to destroy the law, but to fulfil*), he speaks of himself as a Representative, saying, as in the Name of all those for whom he acts, *It becometh US to fulfil.* *John's* Baptism, as applied to *Jesus,* was the Seal and solemn Ratification of his Engagement to fulfil all Righteousness for his People, with the Concurrence of the *Holy Ghost,* and the *Father's* Acceptance. And so *John,* who saw and bare Record, not only testified, *That this is the Son of God,* but also, that he is *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.* And by this he preached Repentance, and Remission of Sins: For it is this that gives Room for Repentance, and in this are comprehended all the effectual Motives to it. This is the only Channel wherein pardoning Grace flows, or could flow, to Sinners; and the Faith of this is the only Principle of that Repentance which has for its Consequent the blefsful Sense of Reconciliation with God by the Blood of his Son, that is called the *Blotting out* and the *Remission of Sins.*

John prophesied of the *Kingdom of the Messiah,* not only as certainly to come, like the Prophets of the Old Testament, but as *at hand.* And while he pointed out *Jesus* as the *Messiah,* he gave his Kingdom such a Designation as served to correct the *Jewish* Interpretation of the Prophecies concerning it, and to point out the Nature of it, in opposition to their Mistake. He called it *the kingdom of HEAVEN,* Matth. iii. 2. And the Testimony of *Jesus* before *Pilate* (*John* xviii. 36. 37.) may let us see, that this is opposed to a *kingdom of this world,* like the Kingdom of God in *Israel,* or like the Kingdom that the *Jews* expected by their Messiah. Yea, *John's* Doctrine insinuated to the *Jews,* that this Kingdom of Heaven would not be confined to their Nation; and that their being the Children of *Abraham,* could give them no Place in it, without Repentance, and the Remission of Sins, the peculiar Property of this Kingdom, Matth. iii. 8. 9. 10. 12.

v. 8. *I indeed have baptized you with water, but he shall baptize*
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ptize you with the Holy Ghost; or, as Matthew has it, chap. iii. 11. with the Holy Ghost and fire. Compare with this John i. 33. 34. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God; and Acts i. 5. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.

If Jesus was manifested to be the Son of God by John's Baptism, much more by the Baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire, on the Day of Pentecost, when John's Prophecy was fulfilled, Acts ii. 3. The Jews had passed a Sentence of Death on him, as a Blasphemer, for saying that he was the Son of God in such a way as to make himself God. And when this Sentence was reversed by his Resurrection, declaring him to be the Son of God, as he had said; his being exalted by the right Hand of the Father, and receiving of him that Promise of the Holy Ghost, (as the full Proof of his being well pleased in him his beloved Son), was demonstrated by his pouring out of that Spirit on his Disciples, who had seen him ascend, and heard him promise, that they should be soon baptized with the Holy Ghost. This fulfilled John's Prophecy, and verified his Record concerning Jesus; this finished the Proof of his being the Son of God; and this was the highest Evidence of his having taken away the Sin of the World by the Sacrifice of himself; for by the Holy Ghost, the spirit of Adoption, he assures the Hearts of his Disciples of the Remission of their Sins, and of their Reconciliation with God, as his Children, by the Blood of his Son.

And this is the Gospel that Mark says had its Beginning in the Ministry of John Baptist.

The Signs of the Times.

M A T T H. XVI. 1. 2. 3. 4.

The Pharisees also with the Sadducees, came, and tempting, desired him, that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather; for the sky is red: and in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day; for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generati-

on seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.

Chap. xii. 40. 41. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

Luke xii. 54. 55. 56. — When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south-wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it, that ye do not discern this time?

THE Sadducees, who denied the Resurrection, Angels, and Spirits, joined with the Pharisees in asking a Sign from Heaven, like the Manna of Moses, John vi. 30. 31. or the standing of the Sun by Joshua. They wanted Signs of Liberty to their Nation, such as God wrought when he freed them from the Egyptian Yoke, destroyed the Canaanites, and settled them as a free Nation in Canaan's Land.

The Sign of the Prophet Jonah portended a very different State of Things. Redemption from Death and the Grave, Repentance, and Remission of Sins, preached unto all Nations without Difference, through the Seed of Abraham, delivered for their Offences, and raised again for their Justification, is a State of Things quite different from that which was introduced by the Signs of Moses.

The Signs of Moses were suitable and proper to his Time; and the Signs of Jesus Christ were as well suited to his Time, vastly different from the former. The Jews could observe Signs of different and opposite Sets of Weather. They could know, that a red Sky in the Evening prognosticated fair Weather next Day; and that a red lowring Sky in the Morning shewed a present Disposition in the Air for the opposite foul Weather. They perceived, that a Cloud rising out of the West, from the great Sea, brought a Shower; and that the blowing of the South wind, from the dry Desert, or from Egypt, brought Heat. But they could not distinguish the Time of the Messiah from the Time of Moses, by the Difference that was observable in the Signs. They did not perceive, that the Signs they now saw, portended a State of Things, the very reverse of that which was introduced by the Signs of Moses. They wanted Signs of the Exaltation of their Nation like those former Signs. Jesus would give them

no such Sign. And they did not perceive, that the Signs he wrought, portended the very opposite of that which they were looking for.

Mercy, and not Sacrifice.

M A T T H. ix. 13.

But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Chap. xii. 7. 8. *But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath-day.*

IN these Texts, *Jesus* sends the *Pharisees* to *Hosea* vi. 6. to learn the Meaning of it. And their Ignorance of it appeared by their not allowing Works of Mercy on the Sabbath, and by their finding fault with him for eating with Publicans and Sinners; such as he came to call to Repentance.

The Lord finds fault with those who go about to establish their own Righteousness, as Strangers to Mercy. He observes an unmerciful Spirit in them; and there is a Reason for it. They find not in themselves the Need of God's Mercy. They have something more to plead than the Publican. The *Pharisees*, among other Things, established their own Righteousness upon their Sacrifices, and the nicest Observance of every Institution referring to these, paying *Tithes* most exactly, while they omitted mercy, chap. xxiii. 23.

Seeing our Lord's Grace to Sinners is here found fault with, we shall best understand this Text by what he says of himself with respect to the Sacrifices of the Law: For it is of these that the Text speaks, when it says, *I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings.* Now, let us see his Account of these, from the Psalmist, *Psal.* xl. 6. 7. 8. and from the Apostle, *Heb.* x. 4.—10. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not will, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sin-offering thou wast not well pleased. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. Above, when he said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and sin-offering, thou didst not will, neither wast well pleased, (which are offered by the law); then said he,*

he, Lo, I come to do thy wil', O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. Here is the obedience that is better than sacrifice, and wherein the Lord delights, more than in all the burnt-offerings and sacrifices of the Law of Moses. This is the true Sacrifice, that makes us perfect as pertaining to the conscience, and sets aside all those Sacrifices that could not take away sins. But, that we may know what the Text meaneth, we must consider, that this Obedience that is better than the legal Sacrifices, this one Offering that pleases God, who could not be pleased in all these, is wholly a Work of Mercy. For as the Father's Mercy to Sinners is manifested in sending him into the World, and giving him to be the Propitiation for our Sins, to declare his Justice in the Forgiveness of Sin; so, when he came to do this Will of the Father, all that he did, and all that he suffered, was in Mercy to Sinners, whom he redeemed from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for them, and for whom he poured out his Soul to Death, making Intercession for the Transgressors, bearing their Sins in his own Body on the Tree, and becoming a Sin-offering for them, that they might be made the Righteousness of God in him. This is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, well known by every Christian, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich; i. e. though he knew no sin, yet he became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. viii. 6. & v. 21. And by this Grace or Mercy of the Lord Jesus, the Apostle would have Christians moved to the good Works of Mercy. Now, this doing of the Will of God, this wonderful Work of Mercy, is more acceptable to God than all the Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices of the Law; as appears manifestly by his rewarding it with a most glorious eternal Life from the Dead, suitable to the Dignity of the Person who did that pleasing Work, and by his setting aside all those Sacrifices when this Work of Mercy was finished.

When Jesus the Son of God had fully done this Mercy, he then entered into his Rest, ceasing from his Works, as God did from his on the seventh Day. So the true Rest took place, of which the Rest of the seventh Day, and the Rest into which Joshua led Israel, was but a Figure. By reason of this true and eternal Rest, there is another Day of Rest than the seventh Day, a Sabbatism remaining to the People of God, even that same Day on which he ceased from his Works, and entered into his Rest, Heb. iv. 7. 8. 9. 10. And thus he appears to be the Lord of the sabbath-day. And, when we rest from our own

Works

Works on that Day, what can be more proper than to acknowledge him in Works of Mercy?

Now, seeing it is by this Work of Mercy that we know the true God, the infinitely *Just* and *Merciful*; and seeing it is by the Knowledge of this that we are justified; we may find, that the New Testament teaches us, better than Philosophy, what this Text of the Old Testament meaneth, *I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings.*

God, being well pleased with this Work of Mercy done by his beloved Son, discharges us from approaching him with any Offering, as if he were not fully pleased with *the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once*; for we must draw near to him in the full Assurance of this Faith, *That he is well pleased in his beloved Son.* And, in consequence of this, he requires of us *Mercy*. Having in this Manner *shewed us what is good*, in answer to these Questions, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?* and, *Wherewith will the Lord be pleased?* and, *What shall I give for the sin of my soul?* he requires of us, *to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God*, in conformity to him who, in Mercy to us, humbled himself, and became obedient to Death, for the Manifestation of the divine Justice and Mercy, in our Reconciliation to God, *Micah vi. 6. 7. 8.* They who are saved by *Mercy*, or without any Merit or Righteousness of their own, must be *merciful*: For it cannot be, that those know God, manifested by this Work of Mercy, who become not Lovers of Mercy by their Knowledge.

Urim and Thummim.

N U M B. XXVII. 21.

And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, and shall ask him the judgment of Urim before Jehovah: at his mouth shall they go out, and at his mouth they shall come in, he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.

HE, viz. *Joshua*, the Son of *Nun*, as appears from the Context, shall stand before *Eleazar* the priest, (Heb. *to the face of Eleazar*), and shall ask him, (Heb. *ask to him*), i. e. *Eleazar*: For the Question here is plainly *Joshua's* Question, directed to the Priest before the Lord, whose Answer comes from the Priest's Mouth in the Judgment of *Urim* to *Joshua*, who goes out and comes in with all the People accordingly. The

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same Thing appears from 1 Sam. xiv. 36. 37.; where the Priest and Saul draw near to God together; and it is Saul that asks the Question. So likewise, 1 Sam. xxiii. 9. and xxx. 7. David bids Abiathar the Priest bring the Ephod; and, when he brings it, the Question is put by David, and the Lord's Answer directed to him. But whether the Inquirer's Question came also before the Lord from the Priest's Mouth, may be considered from 1 Sam. xxii. 13. 15.

The judgment of URIM, i. e. Lights, or, according to the Greek Version, Manifestations. These Lights seem to have been Shinings from the Shechinah, or Glory of the Lord, upon the twelve Stones in the Breast-plate of the Ephod; the same that made the Face of Moses shine. And these Stones, upon which were engraven the Names of the Children of Israel, shining with that perfect Light, when the Lord's Judgment was given, were called Urim, Lights, and Thummim, Perfections; for which the Greek has Manifestation and Truth. It would appear from Exod. xxviii. 17. — 30. that these Stones were the Urim and Thummim: For there is no Account of the making of any other Things to be put in the Breast-plate, that can be called Urim and Thummim, but these same Stones. The Breast-plate where these were set, is called the breast-plate of judgment. And Aaron, bearing the Names of the Children of Israel in that Breast-plate, is said to bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually. The Shining of that Light upon these Stones in the judgment of Urim, may be conceived as the lifting up of the Lord's Countenance upon the Children of Israel.

At his mouth, or upon his mouth; that is, the Mouth of Eleazar the Priest: For we see from John xi. 5. that it belonged to the High Priest to prophesy, even after the Jews wanted the Urim and Thummim, which they had not after the Captivity, Ezra ii. 63. Neh. vii. 65. The Answer that God gave by Urim was put in the Mouth of the High Priest, who had it by Inspiration: And what he said, was manifested to be from the Lord, by the Shinings of the Stones in the Breast-plate of the Ephod, with that perfect Light. When the Inquirer, standing before the Priest, or to his face, saw this, he was assured by it, that what the Priest said to him was the Lord's gracious Answer to his Question.

Now, this was one of these divers manners wherein God spake of old in the prophets. But he hath, in these last days, spoken to us in the Son,—the brightness of his glory; who, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, Heb. i. 1. 2. 3. And so we have in him the true High

High Priest, and the true *Urim and Thummim*: For the glorious Light that abode between the *Cherubim*, and that shined upon the face of *Moses*, and upon the Stones of the Breast-plate in the judgment of *Urim*, and was called *the glory of the Lord*, was but a Figure of the true divine Glory shining in *Jesus Christ*, by the ministration of righteousness, unto the Minds of all them that believe in him, for Righteousness, by that Ministration, 2 Cor. iii. and iv.

This is the Glory of the divine Perfections, whereby the true God stands distinguished to us in the Scriptures from all Idols and false Gods. This is the Name of God that was proclaimed to *Moses*, *Exod.* xxxiv. 6. 7. and summed up to him in one Word, *ψ* 14. even the Name of the *righteous Father*, whom the World knew not, manifested by *Jesus Christ*, *John* xvii. 3. 4. 5. 6. 25. 26. The Apostle *Paul* points out to us this Glory of God appearing in the Manifestation of the Righteousness of God, by Faith of *Jesus Christ*, to all and upon all Believers without Difference, when he says, *Rom.* iii. 24. 25. 26. *Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God proposed (or set forth before) a propitiation, through the faith in his blood, to the manifestation of his justice, for the passing over of sins that were before in the forbearance of God; to the manifestation of his justice in this time, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that is of the faith of Jesus.* And this is agreeable to what is said by the Prophet *Hosea*, chap. ii. 19. 20. *And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord.* The everlasting covenant, wherein God becomes the God of Sinners of all Sorts and Nations without Difference, is, as the Covenant with *Israel* after the Flesh, compared to a Marriage-contract. And the Apostle tells us, that God becomes our God in this new Covenant when he justifies us by Faith, *Rom.* iii. 29. 30. *Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.* And when God in this manner betrothes us to himself; then we know him, beholding the Glory of his justice, his mercy, and faithfulness, whereby he distinguishes himself to us, as the true God, from all Idols; even as he spake by *Isaiah*, chap. xlv. 20. 21. 22. *They have no knowledge that—pray unto a god that cannot save.—There is no God else beside me, a JUST God and a SAVIOUR, there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.* And he spake also of the

Knowledge of this same Glory by *Jeremiah*, chap. ix. 24. *But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth: for in these I delight, saith the Lord.* And these are the same divine perfections that we see often celebrated in the *Psalms*, as *Psal. lxxxv. 9. 10. 11.* Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. *Mercy and truth are met together; justice and peace have kissed. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and justice shall look down from heaven. Psal. lxxxix. 14.* Justice and judgment the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. *Psal. xcvi. 2. 3.* The Lord hath made known his salvation. His justice hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel. *All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Psal. ci. 1.* I will sing of mercy and of judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I sing. *Psal. cxvi. 5.* Gracious is the Lord, and righteous: yea, our God is merciful.

This is the Glory of God that appears to our Minds in *Jesus Christ*, the Son of God, sent to be the Propitiation for our Sins: *I John iv. 8. 9. 10.—God is love. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son the propitiation for our sins. He that purged our sins by himself, is that great High Priest who has stood up with Urim and Thummim.*

He gives, in his Gospel, the Answer to that grand Question, of the utmost Concern to sinful Men, *Wherewith will the Lord be pleased? or, What shall I give for the sin of my soul?* He tells the Truth that he heard from the Father, *That he is well pleased in him his beloved Son.* And when we hear this from him, we behold the glory of the divine *Mercy and Justice*, or of the divine *Love* manifested with its *Jealousy* to us Sinners, by that Truth which he declares: And so we see the *brightness of glory* in him who purged our sins by himself, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Thus we know the Lord, we know his Name, and know assuredly that this is the Word of the Lord; even as the Inquirer in the Judgment of *Urim* knew that the Answer the Priest made to his Question was the Lord's Answer, by the Glory of the Lord shining on his Breast-plate.

The Apostle, in that Passage where he makes the Glory shining in the face of *Moses*, a figure of the Glory shining in the face of *Jesus Christ* to the Minds of Believers, refers also to the *Urim and Thummim*, which the *LXX.* (much used by the Writers of the New Testament) had rendered *manifestation and truth*, when

when he says,—*By manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, 2 Cor. iv. 2. 3. 4. 5.* These must be ignorant of the Truth of the Gospel, whose Minds perceive not the Shining of the Glory of Christ, who is the Image of God; even as they could not have the Lord's Answer by *Urim*, who saw not the Shinings of the Lord's Glory in the Breast-plate of the Ephod. But this Appearance of the divine Glory in *Jesus Christ*, to them who hear this great High Priest, gives them full Assurance of the Truth of the whole New Testament Revelation made by him; by whom it *began to be spoken on Earth, in the Days of his Flesh, and who, when he ascended into Heaven, spake it from thence by the Ministry of his twelve Apostles, who preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven.* And so, upon his mouth, the whole Church of the New Testament, even all the *Israel* of God, must go out and come in.

The twelve Apostles are unto the Church of the New Testament, as the twelve Patriarchs, the Sons of *Israel*, were unto *Israel* after the Flesh, or the Church of the Old Testament: For the spiritual *Israel*, who believe on Christ, through the Word of his Apostles, are born again of the incorruptible Seed of the Word which they preached; even as *Israel* after the Flesh was born of the Seed of these twelve Patriarchs, whose Names were in the Stones that filled the Breast-plate of Judgment. Therefore the *new Jerusalem* is represented to *John* in the Vision, as having twelve Foundations, precious Stones, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; because it is wholly built on their Doctrine, *Eph. ii. 20. 1 John iv. 6.* And this is also the Mystery of the crown of twelve stars on the Head of the Woman, the true Church, in opposition to the Whore, or false Church, in the Revelation. The Apostles point out themselves in their Ministry as the true *Urim*, or twelve Stones of the Breast-plate shining, when they say, *By manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God; and, 2 Cor. iv. 6. God—hath shined in our hearts to the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* So they are the *Urim and Thummim*. The Light of the Knowledge of the divine Glory in the Face of Christ shines to us in their Gospel, which we have now in the Scriptures.

The Truth of the Scriptures.

Observes on the Second Epistle of Peter.

Obs. I. **T**HE Apostle writes to Christians, and describes them, in distinction from other Men, in this Manner,—*To them that have obtained like precious faith with us, in the righteousness of our God, and Saviour Jesus Christ: Εν δικαιοσυνη του Θεου ημων, και σωτηρος Ιησου Χριστου.*

Faith—in the righteousness of—Jesus Christ. He distinguishes the Faith of Christians by its especial Object, *viz.* the Righteousness wrought by Jesus Christ, finished in his Death, and rewarded in his Resurrection; which Christians believe with the Heart unto Righteousness, and confess with the Mouth unto Salvation, *Rom. x. 8. 9. 10.*

The righteousness of our God and Saviour. They who believe in his Righteousness, as did the Apostles, look upon him as God: For he is as expressly called the God of Christians here, where he is pointed out as the especial Object of their Faith, as he is called their Lord, *ψ ι ι.* where his Kingdom is spoke of: *The kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: Βασιλειαν του Κυριου ημων και σωτηρος Ιησου Χριστου.* Peter, and the other Apostles, believed and confessed him to be the Son of God in the Days of his Flesh, in opposition to those Jews who were ready to acknowledge him as that great Prophet, like *Moses*, and to take him by Force, and make him their King; but were offended at his saying, he came down from Heaven to give his Flesh and Blood for the Life of the World, and so to give them eternal Life. The Jews condemned him to Death as a Blasphemer, for calling himself the Son of God, so as to make himself God; and then triumphed in his Death, as the Decision of that great Question on their Side. And the Disciples, whose Faith had been shaken by his Death, again triumphed in his Resurrection, as the full Decision of the Question on the Side of their Faith, declaring him to be the Son of God with Power. Therefore *Thomas*, when he was satisfied of the Truth of his Resurrection, said to him upon it, *My Lord, and my God.* It is without Controversy in the Church of the living God, that *God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, 1 Tim. iii. 15. 16.* For that Church is *built upon this rock, Matth. xvi. 16. 18.* And as it is built on this Rock, it is *the pillar and stay of the truth*, which is confirmed as well as most firmly believed in it. In that Church, *Jesus* is called by this Name, *Jehovah our righteousness, according*

according to the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, chap. xxiii. 6. And this Name whereby she calls him, is her Motto, by which she stands distinguished from all other Societies, chap. xxxiii. 16. For this Society consists of all them, and none other but them, who have obtained the like Faith, in the Righteousness of their God and Saviour Jesus Christ, that the Apostles had.

Who have obtained like precious faith with us. Here the Apostle *Peter* places himself, as well as the other Apostles, on a Level with all Christians, as to this Faith. Every Christian is not a chosen Witness of Christ's Resurrection, is not inspired to make the New Testament Revelation; nor are all Christians endued with the Gifts and Powers that the Apostles had for that Purpose. Neither have they the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven given them, as *Peter* had, that by him God should open the Door of Faith, first to the Circumcised, as *Acts*, chap. ii. and then to the Uncircumcised, as chap. x. But as to this Faith, every Christian is one with him, and with all the Apostles. Every one of them obtains it the same Way as *Peter* did, *Matth.* xvi. 17. *Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* For they are all taught of God, *John* vi. 44. 45.; and they all know him, from the least to the greatest, *Heb.* viii. 11. Whether we value this Faith by what is believed, *the righteousness of our God and Saviour*; or by the Ground of Belief, *the testimony of God*, *1 Thess.* ii. 13.; or by its Cause, and the Way of obtaining it, as it is *the gift of God in the behalf of Christ*, and comes by divine Teaching, *Eph.* ii. 8. *Philip.* i. 29.; or by its peculiar Efficacy in us, conforming us to Jesus Christ, especially in *the work and labour of charity*, *ψ* 5. 6. 7. it is as valuable, as precious, and demands as much Respect and Honour from us in every Christian, as in the Apostle *Peter*.

II. The Design of his writing to them is, that they may, after his Decease, have the Things that were taught by the Apostles always in remembrance: *ψ* 15. *Moreover, I will endeavour that you may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.* This he says in the Foresight of false Teachers to arise: *Chap.* ii. 1. *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies.* He declares this to be the Design of both his Epistles, to keep in remembrance what the first Christians heard from the Apostles; and so bids them be mindful of the Words of the Prophets, and of the Commandment of the Apostles: *Chap.* iii. 1. 2. *This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you: in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; that ye may be mindful of the words which were*
spoken

spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. And he commends the whole Epistles of Paul, with the other Scriptures, as the Guard against Seduction, notwithstanding some Things in them hard to be understood, and wrested by those who are not taught of God, nor stablished in the Faith: Chap. iii. 15. 16. 17.—Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

This, if well considered, sets unwritten Tradition altogether aside. The Scriptures, containing the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour, are the only Rule and Standard of Christian Faith and Practice, after the Decease of the Apostles; even as the Scriptures of Moses and the Prophets were the only Rule of Religion for the Jews. And like as the Scriptures of the Old Testament were kept by the Jews, and appealed to by the Lord and his Apostles, as they had them in Copies and Translations, in opposition to their universal Tradition and corrupt Interpretation of these Scriptures; even so, the Apostle here plainly supposes, that the Scriptures of the Apostles would be kept after their Decease among the Professors of Christianity. And though he says, that these Scriptures are liable also to be wrested; yet, in the Foresight of prevailing and general Seduction among professed Christians, he gives these same Scriptures, in place of the deceas'd Apostles, to preserve true Christians from being led away with the Error of the Wicked.

III. The Things that the Apostles taught, and then wrote, to be kept in remembrance among Christians after their Decease, are most holy and divine. We may behold the Purity and Holiness of the Christian Faith, in the Things said by the Apostle, chap. i. 3.—11. *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us by glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity: for if these things be in you,*

you, and abound, they make you neither barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things, is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things. So writes the Galilean Fisher!

IV. The Apostles taught and wrote in the View of laying down their Lives upon the Truth of what they preached, and left in Writing to keep it in remembrance after their Death: *ψ 13. 14. 15.* Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance: knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover, I will endeavour that you may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance. When Peter was made a Witness of the Lord's Resurrection, he shewed him what he was to expect by it in this World, when he signified to him by what Death he should glorify God, *John xx. 18. 19.* And in the View of this he preached and wrote. It cannot be told what Hope animated him, and the rest of the Apostles, to suffer as they did, besides the Hope of that same Life and Immortality that is brought to Light by their Testimony, concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead. And so there is no Reason to suspect them of any Design to impose on Mankind. Impostors must have other Views.

V. The Truth of the Things they taught, and have left on Record in the Scriptures, was manifest to their Senses in plain Fact, of which they were Eye-witnesses. There is no Appearance of their being conducted by Philosophy or Politicks in their Teaching and Writing. It goes all on Fact, wherein they could not be deceived, and which they testified in the most simple Manner: *Chap. i. 16. 17. 18. 19.* For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount; and we have the prophetick word the more firm.

Here the Apostle points out the great Subject of the Apostolick Doctrine, viz. their Lord Jesus Christ his power and coming.

The Word of Prophecy foreshewed the Coming of the *Messiah*, or *Christ*, a glorious King, as the *Jews* acknowledged: For both *Josephus*, the *Jewish* Historian, and *Tacitus*, the *Roman*, give this Expectation of the *Jews* as one of the Causes of their Rebellion against the *Romans*, and of that War which issued in the Destruction of their City and Temple, and the Dispersion of their Nation. But the Question betwixt them and the Apostles was, If the *Messiah* was then come? The Apostles testified he was come in *Jesus*. And whereas the Weakness of his Appearance, especially as crucified, was objected as perfectly inconsistent with the Notion the *Jews* had of the Power of that *Messiah* foretold by their Prophets; the Apostles declared his Power, as heavenly, and as the Power of an endless Life, by his Resurrection from the Dead, whereof they were Witnesses; by which also they made known his glorious second Coming, sitting on the right Hand of Power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.

And here *Peter* puts Christians in mind of a notable Revelation, and a Fact, manifesting the Truth of the Power and Coming of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, to which he and two other Apostles were Witnesses. This is that glorious Revelation on the Mount, (*Matth.* xvii. 1. *Mark* ix. 2. and *Luke* ix. 28.); where *Jesus* was transfigured before them; where they saw that ancient Symbol of the divine Presence, *the bright cloud, the excellent glory*, from whence they heard the *Father's voice*, saying to them of *Jesus*,—*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him*; and saw *Moses* the Lawgiver, and *Elias* that great Prophet, *appearing in glory*; and heard them *talking with him, and speaking of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem*; while they beheld in *Jesus* the Prelude to that Glory which should follow his Sufferings, or the Pledge or Foretaste of the Glory into which he should enter after that Decease. Thus they saw that same *glory of the Lord* that appeared to *Moses* and the Prophets of old. And whereas there was the Likeness of a Man, or *the likeness as the appearance of a man, conversing face to face with Moses*, when the Glory of the Lord appeared to him, even as *Ezekiel* (chap. i. 26.) describes *the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord*; the Apostles saw the real Man *Jesus* appearing in that same Glory, heard him glorified, even with respect to his Death, by the *Father's voice*; and saw *Moses*, who of old conversed with him in a Figure, and *Elias*, who was caught up to Heaven in a Chariot of Fire, both of them attending upon him, and talking with him of that very Subject which was the great Stumbling-block to the *Jews*, who were offended in that wherein the *Father is well pleased, even his*

his beloved Son's *Decease*, which the Prophets foretold he would accomplish at *Jerusalem*.

So they were eye-witnesses of his majesty, as that great *Messiah* foretold by the Prophets and *Moses*, even the *Son of God*.

And they heard him, whom the *Jews* despised, honoured and glorified by the Father's Voice from Heaven, testifying the Sum of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ that they preached.

And so they had the prophetick word in the Scriptures of *Moses* and the Prophets confirmed to them.

For the Apostle is far from saying here, that any Revelation to *Moses*, or to any Prophet of the Old Testament, is more firm or sure than that which they saw and heard on the holy Mount. On the contrary, he is saying, that this Revelation confirms and establishes all the old Revelations to *Moses* and the Prophets: For here the *Father's voice* applies them to *Jesus*, with the Concurrence of *Moses* and *Elias*. And the Voice commands the Apostles to hear him with whom they are left alone. Thus we may see the Old Testament Revelation issuing in *Jesus* the Son of God, in whom the Father is well pleased; and the Revelation of the New Testament, which is the Spirit of the Old, flowing from him: *Και εχουμεν βεβαιωτερον τον προφητικον λεγον*: *And we have more firm the prophetick word*. They had it more established and confirmed to them by that notable Discovery of the Glory following the Sufferings of *Jesus*, as the Verification of all the grand Things that *Moses* and the *Prophets* spake of the *Messiah*: For this is the Substance of what the prophetick Word said of him, *The sufferings of Christ, and the following glory*, 1 Pet. i. 10. 11. 12.

VI. The Truth of what the Apostles testified and wrote, concerning the Power and Coming of Christ, appears by this, that it establishes and confirms the prophetick Word of the Old Testament; which, after all the Evidence of its coming from God, was to be verified, and so further confirmed in its Accomplishment. And as, without this Accomplishment in *Jesus*, it can have no established Sense, and is not verified by any Event; so, being thus fulfilled, it is a most firm Proof of the Truth concerning the Power and Coming of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, which was foretold in this prophetick Word, and which the Apostles have made known in their Scriptures according to it. Therefore the Apostle tells Christians, they do well to take heed to the prophetick Word; describes, by a fit Similitude, how it shewed before-hand Christ's Power and Coming, and how the New Testament Revelation excels it; and directs them to follow only the Guidance of the New Testament in the Interpretation of it: Chap. i. 19. 20. 21. *And we have the prophetick word more firm, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed,*

heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day should dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake, moved by the Holy Ghost.

The Apostle recommends the Old Testament Scripture to Christians, and commends them for taking heed to it, as they were doing. For, though they rejected the *Jewish* Traditions, they shewed the greatest Regard to the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets, that the *Jews* held as inspired. The Apostles and first Christians looked on all these as given by divine Inspiration, and took heed to them as the Word of God. Our Lord and his Apostles appealed constantly to these Scriptures, as the Word of God, against the *Jewish* Tradition. And see how *Paul* commends them to *Timothy*, *2 Tim.* iii. 15. 16. 17.

The first Christians took heed to Old Testament Scripture as a prophetick Word, having its Accomplishment in the Power and Coming of their Lord Jesus Christ, as it was made known to them by the Apostles. They found that Word confirmed to them in the Sufferings of Christ and the following Glory, reported by the Apostles, who preached the Gospel to them, with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven. And they looked on the Old Testament as a Parable; and on the New, as the Sense of that Parable, or as the Spirit of the Letter in the Parable.

They considered the divine Revelation in Old Testament Scripture, by the Direction of the Apostles, as a Light in an obscure Corner, shewing, but darkly and indistinctly, the same very Things that are more plainly, and clearly, and more universally, manifested in the New Testament Revelation; which, compared with it, is as the dawning Day and Day-star. They beheld that old Revelation, as referring to a more clear and open Revelation that was to come; which they found in the Report brought them by the Apostles: For they *took heed* to that prophetick Word, *as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day should dawn.* And it confirmed both these Revelations to them at once, when they perceived the Things that are clearly discovered by the new Revelation, to be the same that had been shewed before more darkly by the old.

By the New Testament Revelation, they were made to know in their *Hearts* the Things that were foreshewed by the prophetick Word. For, as they believed the Gospel, they beheld the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ; they found the Power of his Kingdom in their Hearts, where his Laws were written; and, having the First-fruits of the Spirit, the Earnest of the heavenly Inheritance, their Hearts had a begun Experience of the
 Glory

Glory following the Sufferings of Christ. And so, by the Gospel-revelation, as *the day-star arising in their hearts*, they knew in themselves the Accomplishment of the Word of Prophecy; very different indeed from that which the *Jews* looked for, according to the *Letter* of that Word; but far more glorious, and perfectly agreeable to the *Spirit* of it. If we believe not in Christ crucified, so as to be *crucified with him*; and if we believe not that he is alive from the Dead, on the Father's right Hand, so as to have him *dwelling in our hearts by faith*, and *living in us*; we cannot know the prophetick Word concerning the Sufferings of Christ and the following Glory, by reason of the Blindness of our Hearts as to the New Testament Revelation, which illustrates and confirms that Word, as *the day-star arising in the heart*. For as God, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, shined into the Hearts of the Apostles, to give the Light of the Knowledge of his Glory in the Face of Christ, so this Knowledge is communicated to the Hearts of Men by their Teaching; and we have it by hearing them, and in believing what they have written: While the God of this World blinds the Minds of them that believe not, lest the Light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them. See 2 Cor. iv. 2.—6.

Now, while the Apostle commends Christians for taking heed to the Old Testament Revelation in this View of it, he lays down this to them as a first Principle for understanding it, *That no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation*. For as the *prophecy came not by the will of man*, it cannot be understood as Man pleases, but according to the Interpretation that God himself, its Author, gives it in the New Testament Revelation, agreeably to that notable Discovery of the great Scope of *Moses* and the Prophets that *Peter* was witness to on the holy Mount. And, according to that, the New Testament Revelation, that we have from Jesus Christ by his Apostles in the Apostolick Scriptures, is the only publick authentick Comment on *Moses* and the Prophets. And every Interpretation that is not agreeable to that, but according to the Will of Man, like the Interpretation that the Church of the *Jews* gave the Old Testament, and that was established among them by Tradition, is but private Interpretation. Yea, though all the Teachers that have been among Christians since the Decease of the Apostles, and all the Churches upon Earth, should agree to interpret any Prophecy of the Old Testament otherwise than by the Things which the Holy Ghost, the Author of the Prophecy, hath revealed in the New Testament; it would still be but a private Interpretation. For the Apostle is not here opposing a private
Interpretation

Interpretation unto any Interpretation authorised by Teachers prevailing among Christians after his Decease, and followed by the Multitude of the Professors of Christianity; but *private Interpretation* stands here opposed to the Holy Ghost's Interpretation of his Word of Prophecy, in the New Testament Revelation, which is here compared to the *dawning Day and Day-star*, in distinction from the Old Testament Revelation, compared to *a light shining in a dark place*. And so the Apostle *Peter* makes every Interpretation of any Prophecy of Old Testament Scripture, that is not authorised in the New Testament by the Holy Ghost, who inspired the Prophets, to be a private Interpretation.

By what immediately follows, concerning *false Teachers* among Christians, it would appear, that he speaks against this private Interpretation, in the View of these Teachers to arise after his Decease; and insinuates, that they would corrupt the Profession of Christianity by an Interpretation of some Prophecies of the old Scripture, for which they had no Authority from the Holy Ghost in the New Testament. And accordingly it is Fact, that, after the Decease of the Apostles, there have been, and still are Teachers among Christians, much followed, who have applied Prophecies of the Scripture to a sort of worldly Power, and Coming of Christ, that was not made known to Christians by the Apostles. These Teachers have interpreted the prophetick Word very disagreeably to that Conformity to Jesus Christ in his Sufferings in this Life, and in the following heavenly Glory of his Resurrection in the Life to come; unto which his whole Church is predestinated, and which the Apostles made known to Christians as the Sense and Scope of the prophetick Word. And, by virtue of this *private interpretation*, these Teachers, not being inclined to suffer with Christ in this Life, nor to wait patiently for reigning with him in the Life to come, have got to themselves a Kingdom and Dominion in this World, which they call, and their many Followers believe to be, the Kingdom of Christ. Of this, they must own, Jesus Christ and his Apostles had indeed no Occasion to speak in their Day: But they are so confident of its being foretold by the Prophets, that they are ready to charge any one that denies it, with denying the Authority of the Old Testament. Yet this private Interpretation, and the Kingdom of the Clergy built upon it, had never taken place among Christians, if they had been always attentive to this Warning of the Apostle *Peter*, with respect to the Interpretation of the prophetick Word which he saw confirmed on the holy Mount, even the Warning he here gives against his pretended Successors. But the Apostolick Scriptures behoved to be fulfilled.

VII. The Prophecy of New Testament Scripture, concerning the Profession of Christianity in the World after the Decease of the Apostles, as it is now manifestly confirmed by the Event, is a Proof of the Truth of these Things, that the Apostles declared, and left in Writing to be kept in remembrance, concerning the Power and Coming of Christ.

New Testament Scripture foretells a general Apostasy from that holy Faith in the Righteousness of our God and Saviour, the Faith once delivered to the Saints; a prevailing Denial of the Power of Christianity under a Form of it, and a grand Opposition to Christ in the Name of Christ. For the Antichrist whose Coming is foreshewed in the Writings of the Apostles, opposes himself to Christ, exalting himself in Christ's Name.

The Lord pointed to this, when foretelling the Signs that should go before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; and in Connexion with that also, the Signs of his second coming to Judgment, *Math.* xxiv. 11. 12. 13. 23. 24. 25. And *Paul* foretells this in his Epistles, *2 Theff.* ch. ii. *1 Tim.* iv. 1.—6. and *2 Tim.* ch. iii. So does *John* in his Epistles, *1 Epist.* ii. 18.—26. iv. 1.—6. and *2 Epist.* v 6.—10. and in the *Apocalypse*. The same Thing is here foretold by *Peter*: And *Jude* speaks of it, in his Epistle, almost in the same Words with him.

In the Epistles of *Peter* and *Jude*, the Antichristian Apostasy is compared to that of the Angels who sinned, and kept not their Beginning, but left their own Habitation; to that of the old World, the World of the Ungodly, upon which the Flood came; and to that of the People saved out of the Land of *Egypt*, who were afterward destroyed, except *Caleb* and *Joshua*. And in midst of this general Apostasy, true Christians are represented as *Noah* and his Family in the old World, and as *just Lot* in *Sodom* vexed with the filthy Conversation of the Wicked.

This Apostasy is to continue and last till the Day of Judgment, and till *the Lord come*, according to *Enoch's* Prophecy, among his holy myriads, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed; and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. For though *Paul* says, *the Lord will consume that Man of Sin with the spirit of his mouth*; yet he tells us, it is with the brightness of his coming that he is to be destroyed; even that same second Coming of which he speaks in that Passage. The Judgment of God to be executed against this Apostasy, in that great Day, when the Apostasy of the Angels is to be punished, (*Matth.* xxv. 41.—45.) is set forth by *Peter* and *Jude* as most dreadful; fit

fit to be prefigured by the Destruction of the old World, by the Overthrow of the Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and by the Perdition of *Korah* and his Company.

The Teachers among Christians are pointed out as the Leaders in this Apostasy from the Power of Christianity, under a Form of it. They are represented as speaking great Swellings of Vanity, concerning the Knowledge of the Way of Righteousness, and feigned Words of the Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ* as their Redeemer; while yet they *deny the Master that bought them*: Not indeed directly; for *they privily bring in their heresies* to the Christian Profession, changing the Truth into a *Lie*: But they in Effect deny his Redemption, and Justification by his Blood, by teaching Men how to go about to establish their own Righteousness in the Redeemer's Name; denying that his Blood can save them without the Methods of becoming righteous that they prescribe to them. They deny the *Master Redeemer*, exalting themselves as Masters in that Kingdom of this World, where they exercise Authority in *Christ's* Name, having the People of the Nations subjected to them, by the Power of the Kings of the Earth given to them, as *Christ's* Representatives on Earth; in plain Contradiction to his Testimony, *My kingdom is not of this world.—For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth: every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice.* And while they lord over the People, and strive for the Mastery in the Nations of this World, they deny that Master who said, *So shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your servant; and, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.* They deny him by departing from his holy Commandment of brotherly Love, among them that are of the Truth, for the Truth's sake; as it stands in Opposition to the Love of the World, and of all that is in the World, even the Lust of the Flesh, and the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life.

While they deny him by turning from his holy Commandment, allowing the Multitude of their Subjects and Followers Liberty from his Yoke, which they cannot bear; they themselves are Servants to the Corruption that is in the World through Lust.

They serve the Lust of Covetousness:—*Through covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandize of you.—An heart they have exercised with covetous practices: cursed children, which have forsaken the right way, and have gone astray, following the way of Balaam the Son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.*

They

They serve the Lust of the Flesh :—*Chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. — Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin. — Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness. — These filthy dreamers defile the flesh.* And these must be chiefly they to whom that Character of Antichrist applies, *1 Tim. iv. 3. FORBIDDING TO MARRY.* For this is the Commandment of the Lord, *1 Cor. vii. 1. 2. It is good for a man not to touch a woman. But, for avoiding fornications, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband ; and Heb. xiii. 4. Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled : but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

They are Servants of the Corruption that is in the World, through the Lust of Pride and Ambition. *They despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. They despise government, are presumptuous, self-willed ; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. They dare to bring railing accusation against them before the Lord.*

Thus, being themselves the Servants of Corruption, they entice many Followers, by speaking great Swellings of Vanity, leading to the Admiration of Mens Persons : And they entice them, by promising them a Liberty, that the holy Commandment allows not, to fulfil the Lusts of the World, naming the Name of the Redeemer from the World, and to walk after the Course of this World, as much as if the Way of Righteousness were not professed by them, or as if the Redeemer's holy Commandment had never been delivered to them. And indeed the Nations of this World could never have been brought in Subjection to them, as they have been, and some way still are, upon any other Terms.

There were false Teachers among Christians, from the Beginning, preaching Christ in opposition to the Apostles, perverting the Gospel, and studying to set aside the Power of Christianity under a Form of it, And there were then ungodly Men, who had crept in unawares into the Churches of the Saints among the Professors of the holy Faith, who again went out from them, or separated themselves, in order to fulfil their Lusts with more Freedom than they could do amongst them ; or who were cut off by Christ's Discipline. But these were only the Forerunners of that Antichrist. And the Work of all these first false Teachers, perverting the Gospel, by turning it into a Doctrine of Self-righteousness, and corrupting the Profession of Christianity, by accommodating it to the Lusts of Men, was but as a Prelude to the Work of those Teachers among Christians who are the Leaders in the grand Apostasy of *that Antichrist.*

These Teachers among Christians are compared to *Cain*, as Haters and Persecuters of the Faithful; to *Balaam*, as running greedily after his Error for Reward; to *Korah*, as seeking the Priesthood, and gainsaying the everlasting Perfection that comes only by that one Offering of Jesus Christ; and to the *false prophets among the people of Israel*, as leading God's peculiar People into an Intercommunity of Religion with the Nations. For the Old Testament had Types and Figures of Antichrist as well as of Christ; and there is a *mystery of iniquity*, as well as a *mystery of godliness*. And these Antichristian Teachers have been seen, in their worldly Kingdom which they call Christian, aping the Prophets in God's Kingdom of *Israel*; in place of which they would have their Kingdom to be now come.

Peter foretells, that, by reason of these Teachers, and the many following their ways, and passing for the Christian Teachers and People, true Christianity would be reproached, and all their Ways laid to its Charge by Infidels: Chap. ii. 2. *And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.* And he likewise plainly points at a Set of Infidels in the last Days, calling themselves Christians in Sport, and opposing the Truth concerning the Power and Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ by Mockery and Ridicule: Chap. iii. 3. *There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?*

If we can distinguish the Apostolick Christianity, the *way of truth* clearly pointed out in the Scriptures of the New Testament, from the Ways of Teachers that have come after them among the Professors of Christianity; and if we can but see the Events that have come out so manifestly, according to the Prediction, and that are before our Eyes every where in the World called Christian: then we have the Truth of what the Apostles declared and have written of the Power and Coming of Christ, evidently set before us. And every Thing in the *Christian world*, that serves as a Fund of Reproach to Infidels against the Way of Truth, will be to us a Confirmation of it.

The Conversion of the Jews.

Rom. chap. xi.

FROM the Beginning of this Chapter, the Apostle vindicates God from the Charge of *casting away his people*, in the Rejection of the *Jewish Church and Nation*. And he says, that
 God

God had not, in that Rejection, *cast away his people which he foreknew*, (ψ 1. 2.); but that there was, as in the Time of *Elias*, even at that present Time, *a remnant according to the election of grace*; and therefore not *of works*, ψ 5. 6. And so, while *Israel* obtained not that which he sought for, *the election obtained it*; and *the rest* (who were not of that Election) were *blinded*, (ψ 7.—10), as was foretold in the Old Testament, by *Isaiah*, chap. xxix. 10. and vi. 9. and by *David*, Psal. lxxix. 22. 23.

The Objection against the Providence of the Sovereign Lord God, with respect to the *Blinded*, imported in that Question, *Have they stumbled that they should fall?* is answered by the Apostle thus: *Far be it; but, through their fall, salvation to the nations*, ψ 11. Their Ruin was not the great Thing designed by their Stumbling. God had a higher End in it, suitable to his Goodness and Mercy, *viz.* the Salvation of the Nations. Even as the Destruction of the Vessels of Wrath (*Rom.* chap. ix.) is not the great End of their being fitted to Destruction; but the shewing forth of the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, is that End to which the Destruction of the Vessels of Wrath is subservient. And we cannot be surpris'd at this, if we acknowledge the Goodness of God in clothing and feeding us daily, by the Destruction of the Beasts his Creatures, even as they also are made for Food to one another; and if we consider that Benefits are frequently handed to us, in the Course of Providence, by the Losses of other Men. Yea, if we be pleas'd with the Manifestation of the Riches of his Glory in the Vessels of Mercy, we can bear with the Destruction of the Vessels of Wrath, as we do with the Shade in a fine Picture.

The Apostle says, *Salvation is come to the Nations, to provoke them* (the Jews) *to jealousy*, ψ 11. And he takes this from *Moses*, *Deut.* xxxii. 21. which he had cited before, chap. x. 19. And upon this he founds his following Discourse to the Nations, concerning the rejected *Jews*. Now, says he, *if the fall of them* (that stumbled) *be the riches of the world, and the deficiency of them the riches of the nations; how much more the fulness of them?* ψ 12. He addresses this Discourse to the Nations, as their Apostle, and tells them his End and Design in speaking thus, with respect to the *Jews*, in these Words: *If by any means I may provoke to jealousy my flesh, and might save some of them.* And, upon this Design, he proceeds in this Way of speaking of them to the Nations, *If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world; what the receiving, but life from the dead?* The Apostle of the Nations being a *Jew*, and having a most fervent Desire for the Conversion of his Brethren according to

the Flesh, extols the Benefit that came to the Nations by their Fall: And, if so much Good came out of their Fall, he speaks of this Recovery, which he ardently wishes, as a Thing that would be inexpressibly great and glorious beyond Imagination. And he draws the Possibility of it (so far, at least, as to encourage his declared Design, which was, *to save some of them*) from what *Moses* said of *provoking them to jealousy, or Emulation*.

In pursuit of this Design, he says further, *For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches, ψ 16.* *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, were separated unto God for the sake of Christ, that *Seed*, to spring of them, and bless all Nations: And their fleshly Seed, the whole House of *Israel*, was also separated to God through Christ to come of them, and by virtue of their fleshly Relation to him, as the Seed promised to their Fathers; even as the Lump is holy by the Holiness of the first Fruits. And seeing *Israel* after the Flesh became a People and Nation, by virtue of the Promise of Christ to their Fathers, as their Seed; Christ, that *Seed*, as he stood in that Promise, was the Root from whence they grew: And so they were a holy Nation, and peculiar People unto God, according to their natural and fleshly Connexion with that Root. This is that same Root into which (as standing in the Accomplishment of that Promise) the Nations, who were not of the Stock of *Israel*, are grafted, according to the Promise to *Abraham*, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, Gen. xxii. 18.* *Eph. iii. 6.*

But, upon this, the ingrafted Nations might take Occasion to boast and glory over the rejected *Israel*, and say, “They were holy, it is true, as they grew from that Root, and stood in it; but now Christ, the promised Seed, being come to bless the Nations according to the Promise, the peculiar Relation they had to him, while the Promise was not performed, is dissolved; and these Branches that grew first from that Promise, are broken off, that we might be grafted in: And so we stand in that Root; and they have no more Connexion with it, as they once had, being now broken off.” *If some of the branches be broken off, ψ 17.; and, Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in, ψ 19.; and thou standest, ψ 20.*

The Apostle grants this, and owns, that they were broken off; and that this was in order to the ingrafting of the Nations. But he shews the Nations, that they had no Ground of Boasting against the *Jews* in this. For, first, he puts them in mind, that they were not the natural Branches of this holy
Root,

Root, but, as it were, taken out of the wild Olive, and planted into the true good Olive Tree, (*Jer. xi. 16.*), from which the *Jews* grew naturally. And, next, he lets them know, that if God spared not these natural Branches, but broke them off, because of Unbelief, when they could no more have a Place in the Root but by Faith, now that the promised Seed was come to bless the Nations through Faith; then certainly the ingrafted Nations had no Ground to think that they could stand in that Root, if they continued not in the Faith. And further, he shews them, that as their being and continuing in that Root was wholly owing to the divine Goodness and Grace, they should also be cut off, if they continued not in that Goodness; even as, on the other hand, they who were broken off should be again grafted in, if they remained not in Unbelief, *ψ 17.—23.*

And he still insists on the Possibility of their being grafted in again, so as to make void the Boasting of the ingrafted Nations against them: For he says, *God is able to graff them in again.* Yea, he shews it much more credible, that the *Jews*, as the natural Branches, should be again grafted into their own Olive Tree, than that the Nations, as the Branches of the wild Olive, should be cut out of that Tree which is wild by Nature, and be grafted contrary to Nature into that good Olive Tree, whereof the *Jews* were the natural Branches. By this Similitude he shews the Possibility of that which he earnestly wished, *viz.* that the rejected *Jews*, whose Case might seem hopeless to the believing Nations, should yet be saved by Faith in their own Messiah, to whom they had a natural Relation; as well as the Nations, who had no natural Relation to him, and once lay at the greatest Distance from Salvation through him, are now saved by Faith in him, *ψ 23. 24.*

However earnestly *Paul* desired the Conversion and Salvation of all the *Jews*, as a Thing no less possible with God than the Conversion of the *Gentiles*; yet hitherto he asserts not, that it shall be as he desired. For all that he could propose for the *Jews*, by his Discourse of them to the Nations, was, *by any means to save some of them, i. e.* those who belonged to the election of grace, who were yet among the unbelieving *Jews*; of whom he says, *ψ 28. As touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers sakes.* And here he says of the Branches that were broken off, they shall be grafted in, if they bide not still in Unbelief; even as he said, the ingrafted Nations should be cut off, if they continued not in God's Goodness. And this brings to mind a Passage that may be compared with this: *John xxi. 22. 23. Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren,*

brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die: but, *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* In like manner, upon what the Apostle here writes, this Saying has gone abroad among Christians, that the Nation of the *Jews*, or the Bulk of that People, once cut off from Christ, shall, some time before the End, be grafted into him again: Yet the Apostle writes not this; but, *They also, if they bide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.*

But what follows, *v* 25. 26. 27. is mostly insisted on for a national Conversion of the *Jews*, who were nationally rejected, or for such a great Conversion of that People, before the Coming of Christ to Judgment, as that the Number of the Converted shall be, in proportion to the rest, as the Number of the Rejected was to the Converted in the Days of the Apostles. The Apostle's Words are,—*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits), that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the nations be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

It appears from *Rev.* i. 20. and xvii. 7.—12. 15. 18. that the Word *mystery* is used in Scripture to signify the hidden Sense of a Figure. Thus, when our Lord is declaring to his Disciples the Sense and Meaning of his Parables, concerning the Kingdom of Heaven, that lay, under the Figures, hid from the Multitude, he says, *Matth.* xiii. 11. *It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to them it is not given.* And thus the Gospel is called *the mystery*, and *the revelation of the mystery*, which was kept secret since the world began, because it lays open the Sense and Meaning of the Types of the Old Testament; and the Truth that the Apostles declared, is the Sense that lay hid under all the prophetic Figures, shewing beforehand the Sufferings of Christ and the following Glory. The Union of Christ and the Church, is the Mystery of the Union of *Adam* and his Wife *Eve*, *Eph.* v. 30. 31. 32. The changing of all Christ's People that are alive and remain to his Coming, is the Mystery of the Translation of *Enoch* and *Elias*, *1 Cor.* xv. 51. And indeed it will be hard to find a Place in the New Testament, where the Word *mystery* must be taken in another Sense. This is also the common Use of it in the Writings of the *Greek* Fathers of the first Ages, when the *Latins* used for it the Word *Sacrament*, as we have it still in the Vulgar *Latin* Version, *Rev.* i. 20. and xvii. 7.

If this be the Sense of the Word *mystery* here, and if it be used in this Text as it is every where else in the New Testament; the Apostle must be here declaring the Sense of some Figure. And we may easily see, at first View, the Figure, *viz.* the *Israel* to which Blindness happened in part; and likewise the Sense and Meaning of that Figure, *viz.* the *Israel* that shall all be saved; *i. e.* the *Israel of God*, Gal. vi. 16. the spiritual Seed of *Israel* and of *Abraham*, Rom. iv. 16. 17. Gal. iii. 29. We find the Apostle likewise speaking both of the typical and the true *Israel*, in the same Verse, Rom. ix. 6. *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect: for they are not all Israel which are of Israel.* And if by *Jacob* in the Text which the Apostle cites from *Isaiah*, be meant only the *Israel* according to the Flesh, there is no Mystery in it: Though, when it is literally understood, the Contenders for a national Conversion of the *Jews*, perhaps would not chuse it as the fittest Text of the Old Testament for proving their Point.

The Apostle then seems to be declaring, that Blindness in part has happened to the typical *Israel*, until the full Number of the Elect of every Nation, or of the Redeemed out of every Nation, (*the nations of them which are saved*, Rev. xxi. 24), be come in; and so, or in that Manner (*οὕτως*), shall all the true *Israel* of God be saved. And this mystical spiritual *Israel* that shall be saved, is that Part of *Israel* according to the Flesh that is not blinded, together with the full Number of the Redeemed out of every other Nation of the World.

This Text seems to import, what is like to be Fact, that the fleshly *Israel*, or the *Jews*, shall remain a People distinct from the Nations till the End, or till the Fulness of the Redeemed out of every Nation be come in; and that they shall not be wholly blinded, but some of them shall be Sharers of the Mercy of the Nations, even as other People. And the Part of that *Israel* that is not utterly given up to Blindness, is beloved, according to the Election, for the sake of the Promise made to their Fathers, *ψ* 28. The *Jews* that belong to the Election, though now Unbelievers, as the Nations had been in Times past, shall obtain Mercy through the Mercy of the Nations, *ψ* 29. 30. 31. For God hath shut up all together, both the elect *Jews* and Nations, in Unbelief, that the Glory of his Mercy might be manifested in the whole of them, without any Room left to any of them, for glorying in their own Merit, or boasting against another. And this serves to humble the Nations, and stain the Pride of their glorying over the *Jews*, while it glorifies the divine Grace in both; as the Apostle says, *For God hath concluded all* (*them* is put in by the

Translators

Translators without any Foundation in the *Greek Text*) in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all, ψ 32.

The Apostle, having declared this Way of God's Mercy to the whole Elect both of *Jews* and Nations, or to the whole mystical *Israel*, concludes his Subject with an Admiration of the deep Wisdom of God, as he pursues the Design of manifesting the Glory of his sovereign Grace, in Ways far beyond the Reach of all created Understanding. And he triumphs in the Glory of the divine Wisdom and Sovereignty over all the Pride of the Sons of Men, in their own Wisdom and their own Merit, ψ 33.—36.

And this is what he writes to the converted Nations, lest they should be wise in their own Conceits, in glorying over the *Jews*, whose Pride God had stained in shewing Mercy to them; and lest they should become high-minded, as the *Jews* were, in opposition to Mercy and Grace; and so be cut off, as well as they. But if we would know the whole of this Mystery, of which the Apostle would not have the *Romans* ignorant, as serving to keep them from being high-minded; we must consider, that the fleshly *Israel* was not only the Type and Figure of the spiritual *Israel* that shall be all saved, but likewise the Example of the Profession of the Gospel, and the outward Appearance of the spiritual *Israel* in the World, according to the Call of the Gospel; as to which the Apostle had said, (ψ 28.) the blinded *Jews* were Enemies for the sake of the Nations. *Many are called, but few chosen.* And we see from *1 Cor.* chap. x. and *Heb.* chap. iii. & iv. that the unbelieving *Israelites*, who fell in the Wilderness, and came short of the promised Rest in *Canaan's* Land, were Examples of the Professors of the Gospel coming short of the Promise of the heavenly Rest through Unbelief. Now, we know that none of the true *Israel* can perish, or be utterly cut off from Christ. But they may, who appear to be of them by the evangelical Profession; as the Apostle shews us, *1 John* ii. 18. 19. And unto such the Apostle *Paul* is here speaking, as he signifies, that they may be cut off, in like manner as the *Jews* were.

Accordingly we find, that there has been a remarkable Departure from the Faith, and falling away from the primitive Profession of Christianity, and that under the Christian Name. And in this there has been a remarkable Imitation of the fleshly *Israel*, in the Things that Christ came in the Flesh to abolish; and likewise a remarkable Pride, in opposition to the Glory of God's Grace, much like that of the *Jews*; and a zeal of God like theirs, who, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, submitted not themselves unto the
righteousness

righteousness of God, chap. x. 1.—4. The Roman Church, to which the Apostle here writes, came to be at the Head of this Falling-away. And in this, its Antichristian State, it is pointed out, *Rev. xi. 8.* as answering to the City where our Lord was crucified. Here then we have the Mystery, of Blindness in part happening to the typical *Israel*. For, because the Professors of Christianity received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God has sent them the energy of error, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness, 2 *Thess. ii. 10. 11. 12.* And this Blindness happened to them, professing Christianity, even as it did to the *Jews* before, professing the Hope of the Promise made unto the Fathers. But this Blindness happened only in part. It could not hinder the Salvation of those among them whom God had, from the beginning, chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, *ψ 13.* no more than the Blindness that happened to the typical *Israel*, could hinder the Salvation of the remnant according to the election of grace. Yea, though both the *Jews* and Antichrist will continue till all the Elect be come in, or till the Lord's second Coming; yet both stand in a Subserviency to the Salvation of the *Israel* of God; as they are both standing Evidences to the Truth of the Gospel, even in their Opposition to it; and as the Preservation of the Oracles of God in the Scriptures, the grand Mean of the Salvation of God's Elect, has been through them: While the Glory of the Lord's sovereign Mercy shines, in calling his own Elect, and saving them from among both the *Jews* and the Christians, to whom Blindness has happened after their Example. The Apostle would here have the *Romans* to know their Fallibility, and to understand that they should be far from thinking themselves infallible. He shews them the Danger they were in of becoming high-minded, against the Faith, and against Grace, and so of being blinded, and cut off, like the *Jews*. And he gives such Hints to them in this Epistle, and such Directions in this and the following Chapters, as, if duly attended and hearkened to, might have prevented the Danger. See Observations on the Epistle to the *Romans*. But they have fulfilled the Scripture against themselves, as the *Jews* did before them.

Now, in all this View of the Apostle's Scope in this Chapter, there appears not any thing like a national Conversion of the *Jews*. And if we find it not here, we shall seek for it in vain in the Prophecies of the *Revelation*, or in any other Passage of the New Testament. They who insist for it, must go to work in this Manner with *ψ 25. 26. 27.* They must say, that Blind-

ness in part has happened to the Nation of the *Jews*, under which it is to remain, till that Time when the Nations shall all come in whole to Christ; and not some of the Nations only, nor only a Part and Remnant of each Nation, as in the Days of the Apostles; and then the whole Nation of the *Jews*, and not the smaller Part only, as in the Time of the Apostles, shall be saved: And that this is the Sense of *Is.* lix. 20. 21. where *Jacob* signifies the whole People of the *Jews*, and the *Covenant with them*, a special Covenant with that Nation; and the *Redeemer's Coming* is neither his first nor second Coming declared in the New Testament, but some remarkable Coming in the Way of that special Covenant with the *Jews*, before his second Appearing.

But such a Prevalency of true Christianity in every Nation, and among the *Jews*, before the End, is irreconcilable with Christ's ruling in the midst of his Enemies, till they be made his Footstool at his second Coming; and with the whole Strain of the New Testament, as well as the Prophecies of the *Revelation*, representing Christ's People hated of all Nations for his Name's sake to the End, and plainly shewing that his Church must be conformed to him in his Humiliation in this World, till he appear to conform them to the Glory of his Resurrection. And such an Abundance of Faith in the Nation of the *Jews*, and in all other Nations, before the Lord's Coming to Judgment, cannot be made agree with the Account given in the New Testament of the State of the World, and of the Profession of Christianity, toward his Coming; nor with what he said, *Luke* xviii. 8. —*When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* But this Notion of such a Prevalency of Christ's Kingdom in this World, while his People remain in this mortal State, appears to be but another Edition of that old Notion of the Messiah's Kingdom, which the *Jews* opposed to Jesus Christ and his heavenly Kingdom, preached by him and his Apostles. And it has served to divert Christians from the Hope of the Lord's second Coming; and, in place of looking for that, made them put it far away.

As for *Jacob*, *Is.* lix. 20. it must be mystical *Jacob* which is turned away from Ungodliness, and from which the Lord's Spirit and his Words shall never depart. The *Covenant with them*, who are turned from Transgression, and who have his Spirit and his Words remaining still with them, is only the new Covenant in Christ's Blood, through which all the *Israel* of God have the Remission of Sins, and not any peculiar Covenant with the *Jews*. Yea, the Apostle tells us, that the *Jews*, who belong to the Election, must obtain Mercy through the Mercy of the Nations; *i. e.* by the new Covenant, by which whosoever calls on the
Name

Name of the Lord shall be saved; and by the Redeemer's first Coming to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself, even his Coming as the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth, without Difference.

We may observe here, that the Apostle seems to join two Passages of *Isaiah* together, as he did before, ψ 8. For these Words, *When I shall take away their sins*, are not found in *Is.* lix. 20. 21. But we have something like them in *Is.* xxvii. 9. See the *Greek Version*. And that is the Passage from whence the Apostle seems to take what he says of *breaking off the branches*. For it is said *Is.* xxvii. 10. 11. *Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof. When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them, will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them, will shew them no favour.* The Apostle explains this by what he says of breaking off the natural Branches, and not sparing them, *because of unbelief*. They were a People of no Understanding: For, being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own, they submitted not themselves to the Righteousness of God: And therefore he that formed them, shewed them no Favour. When *Isaiah* prophesies this of *Israel* after the Flesh, he at the same Time foretells the taking away the Sins of the true *Jacob*, the *Israel* of God; of whom he says, *Is.* xxvii. 6. *He shall cause them that come of Jacob, to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.*

The Kingdom of Christ in the World.

M A T T H. xii. 20.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

THE Prophecy of *Isaiah* (chap. xlii. 1.—4.) concerning the Messiah's Kingdom among the Nations, is here applied to *Jesus*, upon Occasion of his withdrawing from the *Pharisees*, seeking to destroy him, and his healing the Multitudes that followed him, and charging them, *that they should not make him known, ψ 14. 15. 16.*

When he withdrew from his Enemies, he did not influence the Multitudes that followed him, to stand in his Defence. And they were not fit for that Purpose. They were great Multitudes

indeed; but Multitudes of Sick and Infirm, that followed him for Healing. Yea, when he healed them, in place of making himself formidable to his Enemies, at the Head of his Multitudes, made strong by almighty Power, he forbade them to make him known. All the Use he made of them, was, to shew the Tenderness of his Mercy, and manifest his saving Power, in healing them. This was his Influence upon the Multitudes that followed him: He made use of his Authority over them, not to distress his Enemies, but to hinder them from making him known. And this he did, to prevent the Multitude, expecting a secular Messiah, from being moved to take him by Force, and make him such a King as they were looking for: For when he perceived them thus inclined, he withdrew from them also; and when they still followed him, he took care to save them that Labour, by undeceiving them, *John*, chap. vi.

The Evangelist takes notice, *v* 17. how agreeable this his Behaviour is to the Account *Isaiah* gave of him, when prophesying of his Kingdom among the Nations. And so we may look on his Behaviour at this Time, as a Representation of his Appearance as a King in this present World. He would not be the King of the *Jewish* Nation, where he behoved to fix his Throne, if his Kingdom and Dominion over the Nations were of this World. But, according to this Prophecy, the Spirit of God was to be upon him, for shewing Judgment to the Nations, that they might trust in his Name. The Cures he did on the diseased Multitudes, were Signs of that eternal Salvation by the Remission of Sins, that miserable Sinners of the Nations were to trust in him for. And his Kingdom among the Nations, when he shews Judgment to them, and they trust in his Name, shall make no more Noise and Stir among the Nations, nor appear any otherwise, than as he himself did among the *Jews*, when he did *not strive, nor cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets.*

A Rod for a Sceptre, is the Sign of sovereign Power and Dominion: *Ezek. xix. 11.*—*Strong rods for the sceptres of them that bear rule.* *Psal. cx. 2.* *The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.* The Sceptre of this Kingdom is here called a *reed*. And we see the *Roman* Soldiers, in Derision to him, as pretending to a Kingdom, putting a Reed in his Hand for a Sceptre, when they fastened a thorny Crown on his Head. But the Sceptre of his Kingdom is represented by the Prophet as *a bruised reed*; the weakest of all Rods for Sceptres of them that bear Rule. Yet it is the Rod of his Strength, whose Power is manifest in preserving this Reed, bruised as it is in midst of his Enemies, from being broken.

broken, *He shall not be discouraged, or broken, till he have set judgment in the earth.* And this is like the Weakness of the Preaching of Christ crucified, which the Apostle declares to be the Power of God to Salvation, *1 Cor. i. 18. 22.—25.*

A Lamp is also the Sign of a Kingdom. The Kingdom of *David* is said to be *a light, or Lamp, before God in Jerusalem,* *1 Kings xi. 36. and xv. 4. and 2 Kings viii. 19.* And the *Messiah's* Kingdom, prefigured by that, is prophesied of as *a lamp,* *Psal. cxxxii. 17.* But this Lamp is represented by *Isaiah,* as burning dimly, and like a smoking Flax, in all Appearance, readier to die out, than give Light. Yet it is the Lamp ordained for him whose Strength is made perfect in Weakness; and he preserves it from being extinguished. *He shall not fail, or be darkened, till he have set judgment in the earth, or till he send forth judgment unto victory.* The Preaching of the Cross, by which he shewed judgment to the nations, was *foolishness,* in the View of the World and its wisest Men; but to them that are called, it is *the wisdom of God.* The Truth that Christ came to testify, by which he proposed, before *Pilate,* to reign in the World, was as a Lamp despised in the Eyes of that *Roman* Governor: Yet it has outlived the mighty Blaze of that great Empire: Nor will he let it be quenched, till all the Kingdoms of the World be extinct.

Let us now observe, how Christ's Kingdom in the World answers to these Figures used by the Prophet. And we may see this,

1. In the Apostles, by whom he shewed Judgment to the Nations, when they were brought to trust in his Name: *2 Cor. iv. 7.—11.* *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us; troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed, &c.*

2. Jesus Christ may be seen, not breaking the bruised Reed, nor quenching the smoking Flax, by observing his first Subjects and Followers among the *Jews* and Nations; to whom he shewed that Tenderness of Mercy and Power to save, whereof he gave a Sample, in healing the diseased Multitudes that followed him in the Days of his Flesh. Behold him giving Repentance, and Remission of Sins, to his Remnant of the *Jewish* Nation, to Thousands convicted of the Crime of murdering him! *Acts chap. ii. & iii. and v. 31.* And see his Followers among the Nations; *1 Cor. i. 26. 27. 28.* *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things*

things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are. Observe them, and his Influence upon them, *ψ* 30. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Chap. vi. 9. 10. 11.—Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

3. See next the State of his Kingdom in the Souls of his Subjects, (for his Kingdom is within Men), and behold the bruised Reed not broken, and the smoking Flax not quenched: *Gal. v. 17.* For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. *Rom. vii. 21.—24.* I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! The faith that is in the blood of the Son of God, Faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, with the hope of eternal Life, as the Reward of that Righteousness, appears, in the Trial of Faith, as a bruised Reed, not broken. For all Christ's Followers, who fight the good fight, and keep the faith, have some Experience of what Paul says concerning the Grace of the Lord Jesus with respect to himself: *2 Cor. xii. 9. 10.* My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.—For when I am weak, then am I strong. He, who is a priest upon his throne, prays for them, that their faith fail not, in the Trial of Faith. And the weakest Faith maintains a Struggle in their Souls against all Doubt of the Power of Christ's Cross to save them; so that they cannot despair: And so the bruised Reed is not broken. And the love of that truth which is believed, Love to one another, for the truth's sake which dwelleth in them, appears, in the Trial of Faith, as a dimly-burning Lamp, or a smoking Flax, like to be extinguished by the Work of Self-righteousness in the Heart against the Truth, and by worldly Lusts warring against the Soul. Yet this smoking Flax is not quenched, this dimly-burning Lamp is not extinguished;

tinguished: For *the truth dwelleth in them, and shall be with them for ever*; and that *seed of God remains in them that are born of God*; so that they cannot sin unto Death, 1 *John* iii. 9. 2 *John*, v. 2.

4. We may again see this, in the Profession of that Truth which Christ came into the World to testify, the Profession of that Truth by which he reigns in the World, *viz.* That he is the beloved Son of God, in whom the Father is well pleased. For those only hear his Voice, who are of that Truth: And none can appear to be his Subjects in the World, but the Confessors of that Truth, shewing a hearty Submission to his Righteousness. Now, if we observe the Profession of trusting in that Name, *The Lord our righteousness*, among the Nations; we shall see the bruised Reed not broken, and the smoking Flax not quenched. The Callers on this Name found themselves first opposed by the Authority and Power of the *Jewish Church*, flaming with self-righteous Zeal, and then by the Power of the *Roman Empire* lifting up itself against this Name in the Pride of that Virtue by which it subdued the World. But where are now these first Opposers? Their violent Dealing came down upon their own Heads. They are broken in pieces; and have left the bruised Reed, as it was, not broken, and the smoking Flax not quenched. The Antichristian Power, partaking of the Nature of both the former, arose next in the broken Empire; of which, all the World, wondering after it, said, *Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?* And this Power always was, and still is, as far as it is not consumed, opposed to the Profession of Faith in the Righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and of Love to one another for the sake of that. And that same Truth, for the sake of which Christ's Subjects love one another, remains still opposed by all the Learning and Eloquence that can be employed against it. For still it is professed in the World, and is, as from the Beginning, the Object of the Contempt and Hatred of all the Nations. Christ's Sceptre appears still as a bruised Reed not broken, and his Lamp as a smoking Flax not quenched. And so it must be, till he set Judgment in the Earth, or till he send forth Judgment unto Victory. And not till then shall he appear, with a strong Rod for a Sceptre, *a rod of iron to rule the nations*; and with his Lamp as *the bright and morning-star*, *Rev.* ii. 26. 27. 28.

But when shall the Truth be victorious? For it seems this must be the Appearance of Christ's Kingdom in the World, till then. While he rules *in the midst of his enemies*, the Rod of his Strength must be as the bruised Reed, and his Lamp as the
smoking

smoking Flax: And that must be till his *enemies* be made his *footstool* in that *day of his wrath*, Pſal. cx. The Apoſtle tells us, this ſhall be at his Coming, when Death will be deſtroyed, 1 Cor. xv. 24. 25. 26. And when he comes to *put down all rule, and all authority and power, and death ſhall be deſtroyed*, then will he ſet Judgment in the Earth. This is the Hope that the Apoſtle ſets before Chriſtians, when he tells them, *ψ 19. If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt miſerable.* Therefore, till his Coming, and the Reſurreſtion of them that are his at his Coming, the Appearance of his Kingdom on Earth muſt be as repreſented by the bruised Reed and ſmoking Flax.

The Apoſtle ſpeaks of a *Kingdom* for Chriſt's People at his Coming, which *fleſh and blood cannot inherit; a heavenly kingdom, which his People cannot inherit till they be changed, and bear the image of the heavenly man*, 1 Cor. xv. 49.—52. This is the ſame that is ſpoke of *Matth. xxv. 34. 2 Tim. iv. 1. 18. And, Rev. v. 9. 10.* this is repreſented as the Hope of all the Redeemed: *We ſhall reign on the earth.* This is what they have in expectation by the Lamb's opening the ſealed Viſions of *Daniel*, who ſpake plainly of this one Thing, as the End of all, that *the greatneſs of the kingdom under the whole heaven ſhall be given to the people of the ſaints.* And this Hope of all the Redeemed is repreſented to us as fulfilled, *Rev. xx. 4. 5. 6.* in conſequence of Chriſt's ſecond Coming, and the Deſtruction of Antichriſt by that, repreſented *chap. xix. 11.—21.* All that believe the Scripture, as well as thoſe called *Millenarians*, own the *Millennium*, in ſome Shape; and acknowledge a Reign of the Saints with Chriſt on the Earth for a thouſand Years, in ſome Senſe or other: For while one denies the Interpretation that another gives of theſe Words, he holds them true in ſome Senſe of his own. But the great Queſtion is, When does that Reign commence? or, At what Time ſhall the Beginning of that Kingdom be fixed? And that which appears moſt eaſily from the Scripture, is, that it begins not before the Reſurreſtion of the Juſt at Chriſt's ſecond Appearing. And as the great Day of the Goſpel is diſtinguiſhed into *times of reſreſhing*, ſo is the great Day of Judgment diſtinguiſhed into *times of reſtitution*, *Acts iii. 19. 21.* And the firſt of theſe Times is the Reign of a thouſand Years, beginning at the Reſurreſtion of the Juſt; which, by all that Space, goes before the Reſurreſtion and Judgment of the whole unjuſt Dead. This was the Senſe of the firſt Chriſtians, concerning the Beginning of this Reign, from the Time of the Apoſtles, and long after, till they began to think of a worldly Kingdom for Chriſt, commencing in the Time of *Constantine*;

Constantine; and the first that offered a Scruple at this Belief of the Ancients, scrupled, at the same Time, upon the Authority of the Book of the *Revelation*. *Justin Martyr* informs us, that not only he, but all Christians, who denied not the Resurrection, in his Time, were thus minded as to the Beginning of the Saints Reign with Christ. Yea, in those Days, they even thought, that the Apostle *Peter*, when (speaking of the Creation, and Day of Judgment, *2 Pet. iii. 5.—8.*) he said, *Be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*, gave his Sanction to that Saying that had passed current among the *Jews*, That each Day of the Creation stood for a thousand Years of the World's Duration; and that the seventh thousand Years was to be the great Sabbath of Rest for God's People.

But, whatever be in this, we may see, as to the Beginning of the Saints Reign, that the Kingdom set up by the God of Heaven, to stand on the Destruction of the Kingdoms of this World, *Dan. ii. 44.* takes not place till the fourth Empire, *viz.* the *Roman*, be divided and broken into ten Kingdoms: For the Stone cut out of the Mount without Hands, smites the Image upon the Feet and Toes, Part of Iron and Part of Clay, and so becomes a great Mountain, and fills the whole Earth, *ψ 34. 35. 41.* And the Dominion under the whole Heaven given to the Saints (*Dan. vii. 14. 17. 18. 26. 27.*) begins not till Antichrist, who rules in the broken Empire, be destroyed, (*ψ 11. 12. 26.*); which, the Apostle tells us, is to be done by the Brightness of the Lord's Coming, *2 Theff. ii. 8.*; even his second Coming, which is there spoke of. And the Time when *the kingdoms of this world shall become our Lord's and his Christ's*, *Rev. xi. 15.* is the Time of God's Wrath on the Nations that were angry at his Kingdom, and the Time of the Dead that they should be judged, and the Time of rewarding the Prophets, Saints, and them that fear God's Name, small and great, *ψ 17. 18.* who are to be recompensed at the Resurrection of the Just, *Luke xiv. 14.*

The Resurrection at which this Reign commences, is not that from Trespasses and Sins; because it is the Resurrection of those that were slain for the Word of God, and had not received the Mark of the Beast, *Rev. xx. 4.* Nor is it some glorious Revival of the Cause for which Martyrs suffered, with the Resurrection of some notable Martyrs before the Resurrection of all the Just. For this Resurrection and Reign on the Earth with Christ, is the Hope of the whole Redeemed, *Rev. v. 9. 10.*; the whole People of the Saints gathered unto Christ at his Coming, as one Body, as one Man, *Dan. ch. vii.* And none but they shall have Part in this Resurrection and Reign: For the

second Death hath no Power over any of them that partake in it, *Rev. xx. 6.* Any Revival and glorious State of the Church, that is supposed before the Resurrection, at Christ's second Appearance, will still include Hypocrites; they must have Part in any exalted State of the Church that can be before Christ's Coming. But over them that have Part in that Resurrection and Reign, the second Death hath no Power. For then shall *the Son of man send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandals, and them which do iniquity, Matth. xiii. 41.* And when *the beloved city, the holy Jerusalem,* (which is now above where Christ is), shall descend out of heaven from God, *having the glory of God, and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it; then there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth,——but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.* Thus they are all *blessed and holy* who have Part in that first Resurrection, and who stand in their lot, in that Kingdom, reigning with Christ, as Royal Priests, a thousand Years before the rest of the Dead live again, *Rev. xx. 4. 5. 6.* And then shall that *rest* take place that was promised to *Daniel at the end of the days,* (*Dan. xii. 12. 13.*), the blessed Rest for *the dead in the Lord,* from the Time of the Destruction of Antichrist, when *their works shall follow them,* being recompensed at the Resurrection of the Just, *Rev. xiv. 11. 12. 13.* This Rest will not be disturbed by that great Rebellion of *Gog and Magog,* and all the many People of the Nations whose *dominion* had been taken away at the Destruction of Antichrist, but had a *prolonging in life given them for this season and time* of the Saints Reign on the Earth, *Dan. vii. 11. 12.* Nor can this Opposition put an End to this glorious Kingdom when the thousand Years are expired: For when these Rebels, incompassing the Camp of the Saints, and the beloved City, are devoured by Fire from God out of Heaven; and the Devil, that deceived them, to oppose Christ's Kingdom in its Glory, by a Temptation meditated a thousand Years, is cast into the Lake of Fire, the Church will then be further exalted to reign with Christ in the Judgment of the unjust Dead; and, after that, to reign with him for ever in the new Heavens, and the new Earth, and to inherit the restored Creation. So that *the kingdom shall not be left to other people,——and it shall stand for ever; the saints shall possess the kingdom for ever and ever.* Whereas they who expect an exalted State and blessed Rest to the Church in this World, before Death be destroyed, are obliged to own, that this must be again diminished and brought low before Christ's coming to Judgment, to make it agree with the Scriptures, that speak of the State of Christianity in the World toward the Time of his Coming.

T H E E N D.

