

THE APOCALYPSE:

IS IT FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD ALONE?

OR,

IS IT A DESCRIPTION OF THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES?

AS SET FORTH IN

"THE APPROACHING END OF THE AGE,"

BY H. GRATTAN GUINNESS, F.R.G.S.

BY

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THE APOCALYPSE.

A WORK by H. Grattan Guinness, F.R.G.S., has just come into my hands for the first time. I presume it is the last edition (the tenth), and is dated 1886.

Having read as far as the concluding remarks, at page 465, I see the following :

“ We invite Futurist expositors of the prophetic word, to consider all the arguments on this subject which we have adduced, and either to refute them, or to acknowledge their force. Prophetic discussion and controversy are often feared and deprecated, because they have in other days degenerated into strife, and occasioned separation among brethren. These, however, are happily not necessary results of searching the Scripture on this or any other topic, and they are evils from which humility, and a real desire to discover the truth of God, will effectually preserve sincere inquirers and students.

“ We are strongly of opinion that the questions at issue between Presentist and Futurist interpreters of prophecy, *should* be both patiently studied, and fully discussed.”

As the author describes at page 95 the Futurist view, I will quote his words so far as I can subscribe to them ; and I will enclose in brackets any important additions which occur to me. I am obliged to adopt this method, for he puts me in singular company ; ignorant Fathers, dishonest Jesuits and other Romanists, Protestants ashamed of the Reformation, the leaders of the “ Brethren ” generally, extreme parties, no two writers agreeing what the symbols prefigure.

“ The third, or Futurist view, which teaches that the prophetic visions of Revelation, from chapters iv. to xix., prefigure *events still wholly future*, and not to take place till just at the close of this dispensation. This view gives the literal Israel a large place in the

Apocalypse, and expects a personal infidel Antichrist who shall bitterly oppress the saints for three years and a half, near the date of the second advent, thus interpreting *time*, as well as much else in the Apocalypse, *literally*.

“This view is in a *certain sense* the most ancient of the three, for the primitive fathers agree in several of these latter points. In its present form, however, it may be said to have originated at the end of the sixteenth century, with the Jesuit Ribera, who, moved, like Alcazar, to relieve the Papacy from the terrible stigma cast upon it by the Protestant interpretation, tried to do so by referring these prophecies to the distant *future*, instead of, like Alcazar, to the distant *past*. For a considerable period this view was confined to Romanists, and was refuted by several masterly Protestant works. But of late years, since the commencement of this century, it has sprung up afresh, and sprung up, strange to say, among Protestants.”

Why, “strange to say, among Protestants”? Protestants cannot want it for the purpose Rome did, and surely the author, being a christian man, would own that whatever Protestants got of Divine light they got by taking literally what the word of God says. What a pity they stopped at that one magnificent, emancipating item of justification by faith, when there were so many others needing their attention!

But the author has not stated all that those hold who view the portion of the Apocalypse after chapter iii. as yet future. He has omitted, perhaps because he does not grasp it, that the key of the position of what is held by christian men of this century lies in the fact that the Apocalypse is stated by One who styles Himself

“He that liveth, and was dead : and, behold, I am alive for evermore,”

as consisting of three grand sections, viz., 1st, THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN, which, by their very nature, could not be what John had *not* then seen, and must, therefore, be found between verses 10 and 19 of chapter i.; 2nd, THE THINGS THAT ARE, which could not be the previous section, neither could they pass the limit of the last verse of chapter iii., because the next verse—that is, verse 1 of chapter iv.—begins “After this” (*meta tauta*), which is defined as the third section in the words THE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE AFTER THESE (*META TAUTA*), which is the only way to express what comes *after the things that are*.

No possible logic of any school of thought can, as long as THE THINGS THAT ARE are in existence, give the things that are to come after them a *present* existence, much less a *past* one, (as the author does), of interpretation.

This is the key-stone of the Apocalypse. It is not merely the key-stone of a *system* of interpretation, but the Apocalypse itself stands or falls by its own words. Not by the interpretation of its words, but by the words themselves. Past, present, and future cannot be other than past, present, and future; whether it be said concerning the purposes of God respecting the earth, and given to Jesus Christ to make known to His servants, or whether it be said of the nature of Almighty God Himself when He calls Himself the "Is, and the Was, and Who is to come."

In such a conjuncture what is a Protestant to do? Believe the Apocalypse and its revelation of the past, the present, and the future, as stated by the very One on whose account the Revelation is given? or follow the author of "Progressive Revelation" and "Progressive Interpretation," because he has found out, or somebody else has found out, that God is as mathematically exact in His management of the Solar system as He is in the instinct wherewith He has endowed the honey-bee to construct its cell in hexagons? *All* that God does is wonderful. It does not wait till our poor eyes see it to become wonderful. Different effects are produced on different minds by the same things, but surely the wonderful division into past, present, and future of Revelation i. 19, far exceeds the wonders of the truly wonderful year of Messianic cycles. I am in no position to prove the latter, although I take it in good faith as being correct as an astronomer would make it. I have no such reservation about Revelation i. 19. I have not to prove whether *that* be true or not. I accept it as unreservedly as I do the statement that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If I take such a scripture as being the revelation of God's Son for everlasting life, why should I not take, on the same absolute authority, whatever God may have been pleased to write in His word on any other subject? And, let me say, His word, and what it says, has a totally different effect on me to all the teachings of history and science. *They*

retarding influences may be at work. Israel does not recognize her King when He presents Himself, and her day of blessing is deferred nigh two thousand years, and the stranger and the alien are let in to the choicest of the choice, even *heavenly* blessing. Daniel prays, apparently without effect; "but," says the Man clothed in linen, "from the first day . . . thy words were heard, and I am come because of thy words; but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days. . . . But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things but Michael, your prince."

These statements from Dan. x. shew us that while Daniel was afflicting himself, mourning, fasting, praying three whole weeks, there was a hindrance going on outside during the whole of that time, and not only so, but when that hindrance should be got rid of, another would rise up (*v.* 20). And, after all, the "scripture of truth" would have to be the base of operations; and "none holdeth with me in these things but Michael, your prince." So, within and without the church, there is nothing but hindrance from people not heeding what is noted in the scripture of truth; but, as I aver, they wrest them from their true meaning, and thus (as Peter says, 2 Epis. iii. 16), because there are some things hard to be understood, they that are unlearned and unstable wrest them, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own loss.

The same beloved apostle tells me to BEWARE! I pass the word on to my beloved brethren, by whatever name they may be called in this day of confusion, and under whatever phase of the "things that are" they may be found; Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, or Laodicea, I say, BEWARE! Lay aside these dangerous deceits, and let us turn to what is "noted in the scripture of truth."

The structure of the Apocalypse forbids it being applied to the times of the Gentiles, as the Book of Daniel might be. The Book of Daniel is not given to the church, but is very distinctly given to Daniel's people, the Jews. Again, the Apocalypse is not given to the Jew nor to the Gentile, but very distinctly is it given to Jesus Christ, who sends His

angel to testify these things *in the churches*. It can nowhere in the book be shewn that it is addressed to a single Jew, or to a single Gentile. It is the sole and special heritage of the *church*. "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven *churches* which are in Asia." And, again, at the end, in the passage referred to: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to shew unto you these things in the *churches*." Hence it is a special and privileged *church* document; not belonging to the church alone, but to Jesus Christ, though He has been gracious enough to communicate it to His servants through John.

Now, in the communication made there are three items:—

"What thou hast seen" (Christ).

"Things that are" (History of 7 churches).

"Things after these" (Prophecy).

Let it be carefully noted how these three items set before the church are mutually related to each other, and that no one of the three could be left out without spoiling the integrity of the revelation.

1st. "That which thou hast seen"; viz., what is contained between verses 10 and 18:

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

We need not stop to explain who the One that walks among the seven candlesticks is, nor who the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand. Every christian, of whatever shade of thought, will own that it is Christ, and Christ seen in His relation to the seven churches.

2nd. "The things that are" are equally well known as the seven churches seen in their time-state upon the earth, and which, in fact, is the reason they are stated as seven, for in the sight of *God* the church is one.

Now, the church without Christ, or Christ without the church, would be an absurdity. Christ without the church would nullify the Cross and Pentecost. The church without Christ would be a lifeless corpse.

3rd. "The things that are *after* the things that are." These include all the prophetic part of the book. (Chaps. iv.-xix.)

And part 3 is as essential as part 1 and part 2. The very object for which Scripture declares the church to have been created, is that she should reign with her Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

"To sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." (Chap. iii. 21.)

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. vi. 2.)

"Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. vi. 3.)

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. ii. 12.)

It is therefore necessary, if Christ is to judge and reign, and the church is to judge and reign with Him, that she should be instructed in respect to those things in which she, with Him, holds such an important function, for this is His and her joint reward. He has waited for her, and she has "kept the word of His patience." The "prophecy of this book" is as necessary to the church's teaching, as the "book of this prophecy" is to her comfort and internal regulation. The prophecy is her programme—her "agenda" of things that must shortly be done, and whatever Mr. G. may be able to see in the prophecy by the light of the sun and moon, the church of God is not so foolish as to fritter away her "Revelation" into a thing of the past, and let the Papacy appropriate and exhaust its effects. The church of God, by the light of God's Spirit, sees what is in the near future of the world's history, when she herself has parted company from it. If Mr. Guinness looks at Revelation by the light of the sun and moon, and adapts *its* chronology to their movements, of course he *must* say of them (703):

"Our Futurist critics are an enigma to us! They cannot be blind to certain grand historical facts. No one can fail to see how exactly the

symbols of prophecy answer to these facts. Even Futurists admit this, and yet they deny that the symbols foretell the facts; and assert—what of course can neither be proved nor disproved—that they foretell other future events!

No one denies what *your* light shews you. We see certain coincidences which it would be ignorance, prejudice, or bigotry to deny you the credit of setting forth; but *our* light shews us these things as yet to take place, simply because we are told they follow “the things that *are*,” which “things that *are*” are not yet ended, for the heavenly contingent has not yet been “caught up,” nor the earthly contingent “spued out.” How do you have the temerity to say that the question of future events in the Apocalypse “can neither be proved nor disproved,” when we tell you that Christ speaks of them as following the things that *are*, and that the things that *are* are not yet terminated? Say that “the things that are” are not the church, or say that there is no church, or say that the church is a thing of the past, caught up or spued out; but do not say that the things “after these” come before “the things that are,” when the scripture says they come *after* them. Futurists are only men of like passions with yourselves, but they believe it to be wisdom to take what God says, even if they cannot prove it. You seem to find the exercise of your wisdom in making scripture and history fit into one another.

I cannot help thinking that you make no distinction between Providence and Prophecy. Of course, God knows the end from the beginning, whether in providence or in prophecy. I know of no reason why He should not work His providential dealings on prophetic lines. But providence and prophecy are quite distinct, and have different ends in view. Prophecy always supposes that man has failed in shewing forth Christ's glory, and that the Spirit of God is maintaining it. Hence all prophecy, more or less, runs on to the end, when that glory will be more appropriately and manifestly displayed; although meanwhile, the faithful glorify Him by it while waiting. But providence is God's ordering of the affairs of men to keep them alive upon the earth, and to preserve them from the devil, who does all the mischief in connection with providence. (See Job.) I know of no reason why the great scheme of providence

during three hundred and sixty times seven years, should not be carried on on the same lines on which prophecy has laid down the last seven years of this world's crisis. The Presentist can have his year-day, and the Futurist his year-year, fulfilment; only call things by their right names. Do not call the past, *fulfilled prophecy*. Prophecy is the light shining in the dark place until the day dawn. Say it is fulfilled, and you put the light out. It is the same as if you ran your pen through certain parts of Holy Writ. It is the light of day that will do away with the night-light of prophecy. I do not object to what people may see in the seven times that passed over Nebuchadnezzar, and which, as they call it his "insanity," I suppose bears something of that character when extended on the year-day principle; but I do also see *concentration* indicated from the outset, as well as expansion. I see expansion, because I find that the principle started in the image is considerably developed in subsequent visions, especially under the four beasts of chapter vii. Then, chapter viii., developing the Grecian Empire with force and rapidity, to shew its expansion into four smaller Powers. Then, when all the four great empires have been set in motion, the Seventy weeks connects the holy people with the last empire; with its true Christ at the early part, and with its false Christ at the latter part. It only then needed chapters x. to xii. to fill up the details of the latter part to carry the whole scheme to its conclusion, with the true Christ triumphant. During the whole period of this expansion, what people call "insanity" of chapter iv. is at work. It may be that "insanity" is the right word, but what I gather from that scripture is that if man, created for God's glory, does not act with *conscience* of what is due to Him, he must be looked at and treated as a beast without conscience until he knows better. I am not at all surprised, therefore, if the same hand, God, who cares for oxen, lets the dew of heaven fall upon this 2,520 years' period, until the judgments of the Crisis shall have brought recognition of God after a human sort (Ezekiel xxxix. 21); and, as I have said, if this dew of heaven, or rule of heaven, or kingdom of heaven, or kingdom in mystery, or times of the Gentiles, or whatever other name it may be called by in scripture, is conducted on the lines of the

prophetic part of the Apocalypse, I should have no objection to offer to those who have light on that department. All I would contend for is, that it is not prophecy proper that has been fulfilled, for prophecy is for the time of the end. WHEN the stone smites the image on its feet, and the iron and pottery part are broken to pieces, THEN was the iron, the pottery, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces TOGETHER. (Daniel ii. 35.) Whatever may have happened previously was not prophecy, for the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of JESUS.

But I have spoken of contraction as well as expansion. In Daniel ii., iv.-xii. all relate to expansion or development of the great Gentile image; but in chapter iii. I find all the power of the image contracting or concentrating its power for the purpose of exalting *itself*, and making all peoples, nations, and languages fall down and worship *itself*. The great Gentile image, in the person of its head of gold, makes an image entirely of gold 60 × 6 cubits, and inaugurates it with pleasant sounds from the breath and fingers of man. Certain three Jews, however, utterly refuse, under the direst threats, to worship. God is able to deliver, and He will; "but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will *not* serve thy gods, *nor* worship the golden image which thou hast set up." It is a contest such as we find in the crisis week,—death or the mark of the beast. The king, in his rage, orders the furnace to be made seven times hotter than usual; so hot, that the executants of the king are slain by it. And with what result? A fourth and divine Personage is seen with these three Jews, who emerge from the furnace, not only without one hair of their heads singed, but the very smell of the fire has not passed on them. It is the picture of the END.

I cannot find anything of this episode in Mr. Guinness's book. Perhaps I may have overlooked it; perhaps astronomy does not lend its aid to such a small matter. To me, however, it is even more important than any cycle, lunar or solar, or both combined. I find in it the true character of faith that shall be found in the holy seed, when the beast and the false prophet shall be in full play, with the full power of the devil at their backs. I find that the holy seed have got a divine Helper, which is their Lord and mine. I find that the

holy seed may laugh at beast and false prophet when they are in company with the Lord of the whole earth. I find that the beast and the false prophet shall be cast alive into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

You mean the Pope and his clergy, says Mr. Guinness.

I mean nothing of the kind. I mean the beast and the false prophet which Futurists read about between chapters xiii.-xix. of the Apocalypse. I am as fully conscious as any of the fearful mischief that has been wrought by Satan in that which answers to the Thyatiran church, identified as that church has been with the world. I am not surprised that the principles that have their *complete* development in the crisis week should have their *partial* development in the great week of "times" that have rolled by, and that the first half of that week of "times" should have found its expression in the Jew being oppressed by the Gentiles, and in its second half by the church of God being oppressed by the Gentiles. It matters little as to the *spirit* of the ruling power, whether it finds its expression through a Nebuchadnezzar or an Antiochus; a Herod or a Nero; a line of Roman Emperors or a line of Roman Pontiffs. Its spirit is one and the same. Just as the fiery furnace, the den of lions, the work of Titus, the work of the Inquisition, the fires of Nero or the fires of Smithfield, are, one may say, the work of one and the same spirit.

Grant therefore, if it be necessary, that in some way not revealed in scripture, prophecy casts its reflection on the past, as well as being a light in a dark place till day-dawn; grant that the workings of providence have had, in some way, in which Futurists have not been instructed, such a reference to prophecy as have caused certain indications of the closing days to fall with a singular regularity in the events that have transpired, and the aspirations of Mr. Guinness may stand.

"We are strongly of opinion that the questions at issue between Presentist and Futurist interpreters of prophecy *should* be both patiently studied, and fully discussed."

But let me be well understood. I say, "Grant therefore that in some way not revealed," and "Grant that the workings of providence, in some way in which Futurists have not been instructed," &c.

It is incumbent on Presentists to show us what authority they have in scripture for thus working backwards.

We Futurists have not only, as it appears to us, the authority of scripture for always looking forward to what prophecy tells us, but we think we have the consensus of the church in all periods of its history, that prophecy *has* this direction of *future*. And if it can be shown that Presentists have good ground in the scripture for the use they put it to, let them show it that we may not shut our eyes to it. Our education has not led us to this view. We have been brought up to trust God where we could not trace Him. We have said, "Our times are in Thy hand." We have looked upon the wonderful and astounding events that have transpired in our little day, and we have regarded them as we should the leaping lightning, or the rolling thunder, or the devastating hurricane; that providential handling of the universe which is just what we should expect while God is suspending His righteous judgments that His grace may not be hindered. Grace reigns through righteousness, but if God were to deal in open righteousness with the world at one and the same time as He is showing grace, one set of His dealings would stultify the other set.

At the risk of the charge of reiteration, let us look a little further at the past, present, and future laid down in the Apocalypse. While the Church is upon earth it must of necessity be "the things that are." We know that it is, according to 1 Thess. iv., to be caught up to heaven. It is not yet caught up, and therefore it is still "things that are," and while "things that are" exist, it is absurd to say that "things after it" exist; and still more absurd to say that the things that have not yet come to pass have had their fulfilment. No one denies that certain things have taken place since the Lord went to heaven, which have a certain resemblance to things in the Apocalypse, and it would be strange indeed if they did not; for the *spirit* of evil that finds its culmination in the week yet future has been at work in the world all through history. In fact, there is *one evil spirit* at work both in history and in the Crisis, as there has been one spirit of truth which has been working in the church, and which will depart ere the crisis; for the very object of the crisis is to give the devil full swing in the world, and

among men, who have given him every encouragement thereto; directly, by doing as they like; and indirectly, by not doing God's will. As they have sown, so they must reap. Mr. Guinness does not like to entertain a twofold aspect of history and crisis.

"One system or other must be erroneous." (465.)

Not so. There may be some very remarkable things in the times of the Gentiles. The year-day system as applicable to those times may be absolutely correct, not merely as coincidences, but as being the external principles at work in the world, which have their full blossoming in the crisis week; but the lines on which the Futurist, as a rule, works, have another scope and object. He is interested, not so much to know the place that he himself occupies in the prophetic scheme, although it *is* interesting; but he has been told, and he believes it, and feels it, and prefers it, that Christ, and Christ alone, should be the object and end of all prophetic announcement: That the rejected Man who got nothing should be the displayed Man who is glorified in everything. Not, What shall *we* get? but, What shall *He* get? Now, the scheme of Mr. Guinness does not touch this. It is not that one supposes he does not love Christ. God forbid that we should doubt it; but I ask, Is it not the servant's place to be anxious about his Master's interests and glory, to the exclusion of aught else? Very serious issues are involved if I take an erroneous view, even of truth itself. All truth centres round Him who is THE TRUTH, and not about His servants. Am I to read my Bible as a man reads a newspaper? to run over it just reading those paragraphs that interest *me*, and leaving all the rest? Reading, perhaps twice or thrice, about *my* salvation, *my* place in glory, *my* freedom from the toil and worry and burden of this downstairs world, and looking forward to the promised day when *I* shall be acknowledged *publicly* as one of the family, and take *my* place amid the ease and freedom of the drawing-room? I am ashamed of myself and of my fellow-servants who are so out of order in these matters. I say HE has not yet been *publicly* acknowledged! and it is only decent to wait till He gets His rightful place in this world's economy. If He, for whom are all things and by whom are all

things, waits in patience the word from God the Father, let me too maintain the waiting, expectant attitude also, and say,

“*My times are in Thy hand.*” (Ps. xxxi. 15.)

But I might be answered, “Who are you, to judge us? Who are you, to accuse us of a rude pushing ourselves to the front? Who are you, to say we have not our Master’s interests at heart even more than you, although you are parading it and we are not?”

My dear fellow-servants, I reply, I can bear your heat. But, you see, we are His witnesses, and other folks besides ourselves are in question. It is not always the question of the wagging of our own tongues among ourselves. Peter, James, John, are not cut in one die, though all are gold. The mischief is that we set other tongues wagging, other minds working, other thoughts straying, other hopes taking wrong directions, if our talk be not of the Master and *His* interests. If we are in any sense shepherds (I am ashamed to use such a word in respect to myself; but I say, if in any sense this high term can be applied to anybody in these last days), what about the sheep? Have they good, wholesome pasturage? I mean pasturage suited to their nature and condition. I do not mean artificial abominations, but that food which God created for His creatures, and which must be good because He gave it. And what is the true food for God’s people but the Bread that came down from heaven; Christ, the Wisdom of God and the Power of God? Am I so to attend to the few sheep committed to me in this wilderness as to cause them to say, “Our souls loatheth this light food”? Give us political allusions, interesting anecdotes, prophetic disquisitions! Prophecy, like all other things, has its use and its abuse. Its use is to make my dull soul cognizant of the exceeding honour and glory God is going to put upon His Son. Its abuse is when it stimulates my natural love of the marvellous, and occupies me with the course of this world and not with Christ. And pray do not think that I say this just to be scripturally correct, and, as such, to hold up the finger at my brethren. I am as they are. I am as curious to look into those wonderful and enchanting soli-lunar cycles as they, and more especially when they expand into the grand

Messianic Cycle. These things interest me amazingly, but I lay them aside; for my sober judgment, nay, I trust, the Spirit of Christ, tells me that this is not *my* proper pabulum. I find in scripture only three classes of men on the earth. One class does not belong to it at all. Its charter and privileges were all laid *before* the foundation of the world. Its life, hopes, and throne are *outside* the world. It is *in* the world *only by sufferance*. Its Lord had a right, but it was disputed. We have no right, disputed or otherwise. What have I got to do with the course of this world, who am neither Jew nor Gentile? *Their* charter is *from* the foundation of the world, not *before* it, as mine is. To them times and seasons belong, from Adam down to the time when Christ delivers up the kingdom. Not so the church; it knows not Adam, whose son was Cain. It knows not even Christ as its King, *with* whom it is to reign. Eternity is its cycle. The church is to reign *over* the earth, not as Israel, who reigns *on* the earth, and is head of the nations, having the supremacy which she lost during the times of the Gentiles, and in fact never had to its full extent during the reigns of David and Solomon. When Christ shall be King over all the earth, Israel's territory will be greatly extended, and instead of being not much larger than Wales, she will be about $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as large as Great Britain and Ireland. But the heavenly saints who reign with Christ during the 1,000 years occupy the *heavenly* places: no longer the abode of Satan and his hosts; no longer the sphere from whence every influence of evil emanates, but, on the contrary, the sphere from whence every influence of good is disseminated for the benefit of Israel and the nations. So may be understood the end of the second chapter of Hosea, where Jehovah says that the heavens will be in communication with Him, and the earth with the heavens; that all the blessings of the earth—corn, wine, oil—may respond to the seed of God: one complete circle of blessing without a break, according to the liberality of a God who delights in blessing largely.

There is a mischief, then, in distracting a heavenly saint from his proper hope, which is Christ, and fixing it upon transactions at the end of the age, as if he were waiting for *that*. And I do not hesitate to say that the Book of Reve-

lation is *not* of the same scope as the Book of Daniel. The latter is written for God's people, Israel; the former is written for the church. There is no prophecy, that I know of, in the same way written for Gentiles. Gentiles were never God's people in the sense that the seed of Abraham and Isaac are. The Gentiles came in by the way, partly to shew God's wondrous grace, and to take OUT of them a people for His name; and partly to provoke Israel to jealousy. The church has no prophecy, because it has no earthly future. The Gentile has no prophecy, because it is never, under any circumstances, a principal, but only a subsidiary object of God's dealing. All prophecy, therefore, without exception, even what may have reference to Gentiles, is given to the Jew. He and the church are the only two with whom God is on terms by virtue of His own covenant with Abraham and Isaac. I say the church, because "If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal. iii. 29.) Why do I leave out Jacob, in connection with whom alone, if with any one, the Gentiles get blessing at all? For the simple reason that "To Abraham and his *seed* were the promises made. He saith not, And to *seeds*, as of many; but as of one, And to thy *seed*, which is Christ." (Gal. iii. 16.) He that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said that "in Isaac" shall thy seed be called. (Heb. xi. 18.) Jacob represents the one in whom all the crooked ways of Israel are dealt with; the one who gets supplanted by the Gentile, but maintains his name as Israel in the end, by supplanting the Gentile. Crooked as he is, he is Abraham's seed through Isaac (Christ); which the Gentile never was, and never will be. "Not my people" is a Gentile designation which gave such mighty force to the term being written upon Israel as well as to the same term applied to Gentiles, out of whom God takes people, and makes them sons and daughters according to grace. (2 Cor. vi. 16.)

Now I have made a statement about Revelation which I hasten to substantiate. I have said that the Book of Revelation is given only to the church. "What thou seest write in a book, and send it to *the seven churches* which are in Asia.' (Rev. i. 11.) "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto

you these things *in the churches.*" (Rev. xxii. 16.) Why is the whole book put between these two statements? Why do verses 18, 19 (chap. xxii.) say that the book must be taken as it stands? That the prophecy must not be added to, and that the book containing the prophecy must not be taken from—shewing that the book itself and the prophecy that is in it are two distinct things? Why must you not add Daniel or any other book to Revelation prophecy? Because, if you do, you throw it out of gear; you destroy its balance; you make it of none effect; you turn its edge. Whatever any other prophecy is to teach, *this* is to shew seven churches what shall be after (*μετα ταυτα*) seven churches have come to their finality on earth. Prophecy must of necessity be "things to come." "Things that are" is history, not prophecy. The Holy Ghost's testimony is twofold. "He shall take of the things of Mine, and shall shew it unto you"; and "He shall shew you things to come." The latter is prophecy; the former is not. Now the "things that are" have not reached finality, inasmuch as the testimony has not been finally rejected, and the church as a witness "spued out" of Christ's mouth. Until it is (and something will have to be done with overcomers, for we may be sure *they* are not spued out) "the things that shall be *after* these" cannot take place. The person who holds this self-evident fact is dubbed "a Futurist," whereas the person who dubs himself "a Presentist" will tell you not only that *all the future has already come to pass!* but he can give you the dates; and, if you wish it, he could astronomically give you the hour and the minute, for all these things synchronize with the course of the sun and moon! I have before said I find these statements wonderful, and I am not indulging in anything apart from seriousness when I say so; but if you ask me to set aside the plain word of God, as declared in the Book of Revelation, I not only get restive, but I would denounce as emptiness anything that dares compete with it. Let the sun and moon stand still, and the whole host of heaven be moved out of their places, before the word of the mighty God who gave them all their several orbits be displaced! "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the

breath of His mouth"; but the smallest revelation of His Christ surpasses all.

But it may be said, If the things after the third chapter of Revelation have not yet begun to come to pass, how comes it that we Presentists have, by our soli-lunar interpretation, been able to shew such results of coincidence as almost to amount to the miraculous, if it is not the result of divine ordering? To this I reply, that I am told to obey, not to speculate and then try to account for speculations. I have shewn that the things "after" things that "are" do not require semi-lunar observations, but are plain words addressed to "the churches." ("Ye see not many wise are called.")

I have not got to account for speculations you have started. *I know* who is the Faithful witness in the church of God, *but I do not know* (through God's grace) the mysteries of the harlot church, and him who works them after his own will. (2 Tim. ii. 26.) I should be very sorry to say, unless the Word informed me of it, that it was the God of Heaven who was regulating the times of the Gentiles, so as to make the transactions of the mystic Babylon fit in with the Apocalyptic visions. It does not become me, to pronounce judgment on such a subject, neither am I called upon to do so. The only way to keep out of error is to say only what the Word plainly says, and to abstain from saying what IT does not say. Satan can trip us up even when we say what may be true in itself abstractedly, if it be not "the truth" which is what the Spirit of truth leads us into, and *that* because "the truth" is Christ. I should be very sorry to think that Mr. Elliott and Mr. Guinness were not dear to the Lord as redeemed by His blood; but if even Peter savours not of the things of God, but the things of men, he is met by a prompt "Get thee behind me, adversary!" Mr. E. interprets the seven thunders as Papal bulls. (*Horae Apoc.* vol. ii. p. 119.) What right has he to disclose what John is told to seal and not write? Is he wiser than the Spirit of God, who had His reasons for not telling us of the seven thunders, and yet giving us ample particulars concerning seven seals, trumpets, and vials? The scriptures are by God's grace given us for heart and conscience to be governed and regulated by, not to do with as we list, as men have already done with the Son of man. Is nothing to be

held sacred from a utilitarian age? Is man to out-rival the artfulness of the fabled Prometheus, because he cannot wait an answer by return of post? Daniel mourns and fasts for three weeks, then waits three days, and *then* is found powerless and with his face to the earth ere he is strengthened to receive the communications concerning his people. Is this the attitude of the men of this generation in their *rôle* of prophecy-mongers? No; *this* is the modern method:

“We are strongly of opinion that the questions at issue between Presentist and Futurist interpreters of prophecy should be both patiently studied, and fully discussed, both from the platform and by the press,”

(I trust he does not mean the newspapers!)

“with a view to their removal. One system or other must be erroneous; surely it is not hopeless to discover which!”

Where is God in all this? Where the Spirit of truth? Where the Master's honour? Is it really a “Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants” or not? Am I to conduct my friends through Her Majesty's private grounds, and give my opinions as to her arrangements, without even asking her permission? nay, more, to show that her servants and those of her adversary hold views which *must* be erroneous because I hold the contrary?

“Taken literally, the periods of symbolic prophecy are astronomically *nothing*.”

Very likely. More than very likely. If God chooses to give a Revelation of Jesus Christ; if Jesus Christ chooses to employ an angel to go and show that Revelation to His servant John, with His own Personal instructions to John to write it in a book to be sent to seven assemblies in Asia, who am I that I should say, that if those assemblies, or whomsoever may represent those assemblies, take what is written literally, they are astronomically nothing? Jesus Christ did not say they were astronomically anything. The angel simply said:

“These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to shew unto His servants the things which must shortly be done.”

And then, to give stronger force, Jesus Himself says:

"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." (Rev. xxii. 6, 7.)

Why "shortly," if a year for a day is to be understood by these servants? And how "shortly" if some 1800 years are to elapse before they are to come into force? Whereas if I am in heaven before they begin, they are "shortly" indeed.

Because, mark it well, O Presentists, as you designate yourselves, "taken literally the periods of symbolic prophecy are astronomically *nothing*." You are in the "Times of the Gentiles," and astronomically you have got to wait possibly 31 years from 1892 ere the heavens will open according to Revelation xix., and "The Word of God" comes forth. We Futurists, as you call us, still found among the "things that *are*," have never astronomically been connected with our absent Lord, but, on the contrary, His coming has been always THE NEXT THING according to *our* hope. That hope has been no juggle of words. There has been an avowed hindrance; we have always been told that there was, but we were told not to be discouraged by it, but to keep ourselves "in the love of God," and "in the patience of Christ." We have not always been patient or intelligent, I admit; still, we have had to *wait*, and to comfort one another we have nourished our immediate *hope*. From what you tell us, it *may* be that the "times of the Gentiles" cause the delay. They *may* have to run out or not; it does not affect us. We once were Gentiles. (1 Cor. xii. 2.) We were in time past Gentiles (Eph. ii. 11), but we are not so now; we are baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. xii. 13), and in spite of the extraordinary insinuations made by the author on pages 136-7, we hold, not only that the church is in heaven during the whole course of the apocalyptic judgments and God's dealings with His Jewish saints on earth, but that the church, which is His body, is also the bride, the Lamb's wife, ere the Lord appears, in Revelation xix.

In order to make the church pass through the apocalyptic judgments (he would find them far more terrible than he now so lightly estimates them), the author has to pass through some processes of reasoning which, were he in subjection to the

teaching of the word of God, he would be preserved from. He says, on page 134, of John :

“He was in exile for the word of God, and for the testimony which he held, which expression therefore means *Christianity*.”

He knows very well that he ought to have written “which in John’s case means *Christianity*.” He knows perfectly well that the word of God and testimony existed *before* Christianity, and that it will exist *after* it. And if he is ignorant of the latter, from unconsciousness that not Christ’s presence on earth only, but the Holy Ghost’s also, constitutes Christianity, he knows that “the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” But the reason that this illogical statement is made is to fasten another upon it. He says :

“Under the fifth seal we catch a glimpse of a company of martyrs who were slain ‘for the word of God and for the testimony which they held,’ that is, for confessing their *Christian faith*, like John ; they were slain because they were Christians.”

Let us hear from the scripture itself how they express their Christianity :

“How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ?”

Does the author really believe that this is the language of Christianity ? If so, we may well use the Master’s words, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” (Luke ix. 55.) It is as essentially the language of Israel to call for righteousness as it is for Christians to call for grace.

“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,”
is the language of Christianity.

“Let God, arise, and let His enemies be scattered,”
is the proper language of the earthly people.

Then the author says :

“In chapter vii. we have presented to us a company in heaven, unquestionably *Christians* also.

“In chapter viii. ‘the prayers of all saints’ and ‘the prayers of the saints’ are mentioned ; now prayer ascends from suppliants on earth, and ‘saints’ in New Testament phraseology means *Christians*. We have no right in the last book of the New Testament to revert to an Old Testament signification of this word.”

No one but the author says they are in heaven. No one but the author says they are Christians. Is the great tribulation out of which the elder tells us they are come, in heaven? Is *before* the throne the same thing as *on* the throne or *within the circle of* the throne? The question is raised by the elder with John, and answered by the elder for the express purpose of instructing the author that these saved Gentiles are *not* in the same category as those represented by the elder. If the author grasped the structure of the Apocalypse, he could not fail to see that in this wonderful book of judgment, which God has, by Jesus Christ, put into the hands of Christians, He is telling them of His direct dealings with themselves, with the Jews, with the Gentiles, with the heaven-dwellers, with the earth-dwellers, with the true church, with the false church, with the devil, with the beast, with the false prophet; in fact, with every possible class that can come under judgment. And between the lines of His direct judgment He, in wonderful parentheses, lets us know His *purpose* ere the things themselves come to pass in the direct dealings of the book. Hence the opening of the fifth seal is a parenthesis, by which we are informed that martyrs, using Israel's language, must wait awhile, till other like martyrs are in existence; but in the mean time the white robe is an assurance to them that they are accounted righteous. The blood of the Lamb is not mentioned, because the covenant which God made with their fathers was *based upon that blood*; "for without shedding of blood is no remission." In the case of the sealing, under the next parenthesis, it is the same; no blood is mentioned, because it is involved in the promises made to the fathers. But in the case of the Gentiles (always known by the terms nations, kindreds, people, tongues) blood must be mentioned, because they are (as Christians once Gentiles were) strangers from the covenants of promise. (Eph. ii. 12.) Then, as to the parenthesis following the sixth trumpet, there is the testimony of the little book, which has to be made before peoples, nations, tongues, and kings. (Chapter x. 11.) As to the two witnesses who make their testimony during 1260 days, and are slain, people, kindreds, tongues, and nations looking on, and earth-dwellers making merry, all this is subject of parenthesis. Then again, when the beast comes into

the scene in chapter xiii., we get him exercising his blasphemy against God, His name, His tabernacle, and heaven-dwellers, for he cannot do anything else to those he cannot reach; but to those he *can* reach, viz., saints, he overcomes them. Kindreds, tongues, and nations, he exercises power over them; earth-dwellers, they fall down and worship him. Afterwards, in chapter xiv., we get another instance of saved Jew and Gentile; of the first, 144,000 on Mount Zion (these are *before* the throne), and of the second, the everlasting gospel declared to earth-dwellers, nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples.

All these (so rapidly glanced over) the author masses indiscriminately together, and calls them "the church," and intimates (page 137) that those who teach otherwise ought to be ashamed of themselves for not "rightly dividing the word of truth"!

As I have said before, God forbid that doubt should be thrown upon the author's being a sincere Christian man. Many passages in his book in the earlier pages are really excellent. But, as he says (page 24),

"It is strange that many children of God are content to leave this great question an open one, and to continue in willing ignorance on the subject. And it is doubly strange that too many who ought, as teachers of the truth, boldly to declare the whole counsel of God, should be content to promulgate, through the entire course of their ministry, views which they hold from education and from habit,"

aided by astronomy,

"rather than as the result of research and of strong conviction,"
the result of God's word and Spirit and prayer,

"that they are *the truth*, views that they would be at a loss to sustain by solid scriptural argument.

"And the views thus thoughtlessly imparted, and thoughtlessly received, are yet firmly held; for mental habits are strong. That which we have always heard and supposed to be true, that which most people appear to hold as true, assumes the authority of ascertained truth in the mind, and the moment it is attacked, prejudice rises in arms to defend it. The consequence is, that notwithstanding the late large and rapid increase in the number of those who look for the coming of Christ as their own individual hope, and as the next great event in the history of the Church, and of the

world, the majority of professing Christians, and especially those who have little leisure for reading and study, still retain the opposite view, look for death personally, and expect the coming of Christ to take place only at the end of the world,"

or at the end of the times of the Gentiles.

"Yet that coming is the grand motive uniformly presented in the New Testament to love, to obedience, to holiness, to spirituality of mind, to works of mercy, to watchfulness, to patience, to moderation and sobriety, to diligence, and to all other Christian graces." "That blessed hope' is essential to the production of the Christian character in its perfection. What consolation it affords in bereavement and affliction! What holy restraint it is calculated to exercise in prosperity and joy, and what an incentive it supplies to exertion in the christian work and warfare,"

and what a refreshment to the heart of the blessed patient Lord and Master to think that His waiting ones love Him, are not discouraged at the length of the journey, and are overjoyed at the thought that soon He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied!

Now, the above quotation from the author is really excellent, and to the point; and if parentheses have been added, it is not in an unbrotherly spirit, but to shew where, in the writer's heart, he believes the author's weak points lie. No believer has any ground of boasting over his fellow-believer that he should be puffed up for one against another. "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not *receive*? Now if thou didst *receive* it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not *received* it?" (1 Cor. iv. 6, 7.) The writer takes credit for nothing. It was intended that the whole company should be the result of

"God, rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace we [Gentiles] are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 6, 7.)

It is an ungracious and an uncongenial occupation to find fault with another's labours—labours very far greater than any one who reads a book of 776 pages would suppose. Let the writer leave other matter, on which a companion volume,

of an equal number of pages might be written, and briefly, if God give ability, present a few remarks on the Apocalypse as given to the Church of God. But first a few preliminary reflections.

Man is a compound being, created to be the exponent of varied glories, and to be to the praise of Him who called him out of darkness into His marvellous light.

We have just used two symbols. Let us take the latter and divide it into its primaries.

Man is a compound being. Intelligence, conscience, affections, must be duly blended, and in due proportions, else light will not be manifested.

An angel could not be so defined. Intelligence might be there, for God is Light. Love might be there, for God is Love. But conscience could not be there, for an angel has not sinned.

All that forms a man is found in "the scripture of truth." An angel does not need the scripture. They do God's will, "hearkening to the voice of His word."

Man or angel therefore, the Word of God is the food by which each exist. It is, so to speak, the *raison d'être* of their existence.

The third verse of Gen. i. begins "And God 'said.'" The last verse but one of Revelation informs us that "He which testifieth these things 'saith.'"

If fallen man's word be taken as a guide, he can only as a blind man lead the blind.

If renewed man's word be taken as a guide, he can only point to God's word. Renewed by it, he never can rise above it, and therefore must appeal to it.

Even the Lord Jesus Himself as Man appeals to the scripture. As God He *is* The Word.

Renewed man therefore not only has no need to travel outside the scripture of truth for the interpretation of God's mind, but if he does so travel outside of it he gets into the darkness.

The scripture of truth itself may be divided into three primary parts: The things that have been, the things that are, and the things that will be, after these.

That which is divine is known by threefold manifestation in

order to present to us oneness. Father, Son, Holy Ghost—one God.

That which is divine, expressed manward, is known by four-fold manifestation. Hence four gospels to present Christ: King, Prophet, Man, Son.

Daniel and John are both men upon whom the choice title of "Beloved" is stamped. To both were committed the secrets of the future.

To Daniel was entrusted secrets concerning the Gentile and the Jew.

To John was entrusted secrets concerning the church of God, the Gentile, and the Jew.

Observe how in each case the Jew comes last. Why? Because, had he not failed, prophecy had never been needed at all.

Prophecy is divine light, graciously bestowed to illumine man's darkness till the day dawn.

When Israel's light waned, the Gentile kept order by divine appointment.

When under Gentile rule a voice was heard saying, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Alas! there was no response.

"The darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." Alas! still no response.

"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (Isaiah lx. 3.)

The church is formed.

No prophecy finds its fulfilment in itself. (See 2 Peter i. 20.) The above has all of it to be repeated at the close of the times of the Gentiles. But where is the church? Gone!

Daniel sees the future of the chosen people from the EARTH. He is one of them. "Go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." (Daniel xii. 13.)

John sees the future of the chosen people from HEAVEN. He is of it. "After this I looked, and, behold, a door opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard as it were a trumpet talking with me [chap. i. 10]; which said, Come up

hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." (Rev. iv. 1.)

John "in the Spirit" hears the history of seven churches which are in Asia announced by sound of trumpet in the isle that is called Patmos. (i. 9, 10.)

John receives an invitation to come up to heaven, also announced by sound of trumpet, to be shown what must be hereafter. Immediately he is "in the Spirit." (iv. 1, 2.)

John "in the Spirit" is carried by one of the angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, to a great and high mountain. (xxi. 9, 10.)

John was talked to by this angel, showing that judgments were all over, and he not touched by them, seeing he had been in heaven all the time. (xxi. 9.)

John, on the great and high mountain, sees the bride, the Lamb's wife, under the symbol of that great city the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. (xxi. 10.)

John tells us that "the Gentiles shall walk by means of its light" (see editors), "and the kings of the earth [all Israel] do bring their glory" (see editors) "unto it" (xxi. 24), "and they shall bring the glory and honour of the Gentiles unto it." (xxi. 26.)

Let us recapitulate the above.

John *on earth* hears the seven-phased history of the church *on earth*.

John **IN HEAVEN** sees the judgments on Israel, the Gentiles and all the powers that have led them astray on earth.

John, *on earth* again, sees the church descending **FROM HEAVEN**.

Let us hear Mr. Guinness.

"So far from the church being actually and exclusively in heaven at the commencement of the prophetic drama of this book, *she is seen on earth during its entire course.*" (Page 136.)

Let us get to Scripture again.

"Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold or hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." (Rev. iii. 14-16.)

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father on His throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. After this (*μετα ταυτα*) I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter” (*μετα ταυτα*). (Rev. iii. 21, 22; iv. 1.)

Let us recapitulate the above.

In the seventh phase of the church it is spued out. But the overcomer is granted a place with the faithful and true Witness on His throne, as He overcame and sat down on His Father's throne. *After* those things John is shown what shall be *after* those things. But he is taken up to heaven to see them.

Now I want to ask Mr. Guinness: Is the church that “is seen on earth during its entire course” (page 136) that which is seen as spued out? or that which is described as overcoming?

If it is the spued-out part, how is it seen coming down out of heaven from God? (Chap. xxi. 10.)

If it is the overcomer part, why is it not seen on the throne as promised, when things are occurring *after* its overcoming? (Chap. iii. 21.)

I will not leave any reader in suspense till Mr. Guinness shall have answered the above. There is only one conclusion that can be drawn therefrom; and that is, that the spued-out part merges in the judgments of the remainder of the book (vi.-xix.), while the overcomer is taken up before those judgments begin; and the promise to the previous section (Philadelphia) confirms it: “I will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.” (Chap. ii. 10.)

Fellow-Christian,—If you believe what has been advanced up to this point, hold it fast, that no man take thy crown; for Jesus says He is coming quickly. You would find sorry comfort in soli-lunar cycles, if you were left behind to go through a tribulation more dreadful than anything that has ever yet happened to the sons of men. To find that (whatever mercy God might be pleased to hold out to you as a Gentile, and as such to deliver you from that great tribulation), you had forfeited for ever all place with the church which is Christ's body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all; would be sad

indeed. Rub out the church; and Mr. Guinness's book is, I take it, a very remarkable book concerning the end.

That Mr. Guinness's teaching involves you in the great tribulation, let me point out to you from his book. Turn to page 136. After having said that the church

"is seen on earth during its entire course"—

and he uses italics that you may not mistake his meaning—he says,

"She is seen collectively under various symbols, such as
 The hundred and forty-four thousand,
 The two witnesses,
 The sun-clad woman,
 The armies of heaven,
 The new Jerusalem,
 and
 Her members are seen severally
 as 'the saints.'"

The armies of heaven and the New Jerusalem we need not concern ourselves with. He cannot possibly mean that the armies that are seen to come out of heaven are on earth at the same time; neither can we suppose that the New Jerusalem which comes down from God out of a *new* heaven can be seen on the *old* earth, after the said old earth has been dissolved into its elements. So leaving these "symbols," which I presume must have something they symbolize, let us consider first:

The hundred and forty-four thousand.

This, as it comes before the two witnesses, must be the 144,000 of the seventh chapter.

Let us betake ourselves to "that which is noted in the scripture of truth."

"I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." (Rev. vii. 4.)

This is the oddest possible "symbol" of "the church," especially as each tribe is mentioned by name: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Aser, Nephthalim, Manasses, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zabulon, Joseph, Benjamin. If there are two things in the Acts and the Epistles

that stand in the strongest contrast to each other, the one being the result of counsel *before* and the other *from* the foundation of the world, it is the church and Israel. To take Israel, then, in the most literal of all forms in which it can be described, and to pretend that it is a "symbol" of the church, is to display before men how far the human mind can err from the truth, to substantiate the creations of itself.

Hear Mr. Guinness on symbols (p. 104):

The system that says: "Babylon means Babylon must be false. In the Apocalypse Babylon does *not* mean Babylon, nor Jerusalem Jerusalem, nor a Jew a Jew, nor the temple the temple."

Now the above sentence is written for the purpose of slipping in the words "nor a Jew a Jew." I will prove it presently. Mr. G. inserts it honestly, I doubt not. But we need be careful who is at our elbow when the pen is in hand.

In the Apocalypse, no doubt, "Babylon" is not the city which bore that name, but refers to the vast system of which the city was one expression. So likewise with Jerusalem. Babylon was the metropolis of the devil; transferred to Pergamos when Babylon fell, and transferred from thence by Attalus III. to Rome, where it assumed its mystic form. Jerusalem, on the other hand, was the metropolis of God; and as such, could stand for a heavenly or an earthly city, equally well to express either. So also the Temple, which represented [not any of the five temples built in Jerusalem, so much as it expressed] all that arrangement and disposing of things by which God could be worshipped. Hence in the Holy Jerusalem there is no temple as known before; because God and the Lamb have their rightful place as such.

But to introduce the false symbol:

"Nor a Jew a Jew."

Paul, dealing with the Jew in the sight of God, in Romans ii., tells him that the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles by reason of his doing the very things which, as a Jew, he was a public testimony should not be done. What is the use of this testimony, says the Holy Ghost, through the apostle, if the one that you are to testify to, has to turn round and set you right? (Verse 27.) "For he is not a Jew which

is one outwardly. . . . But he is a Jew [not a Christian] which is one inwardly."

The above is brought forward by Mr. G. to support a statement that our Lord takes from "Jew" its old literal meaning, and confines it to a higher sense. (Page 106.) The statement so supported, is one needing much support indeed. Let us look at it.

Mr. G. says:

"There is . . . the twice repeated expression 'which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie.' The parties alluded to clearly were literal Jews, but being unbelievers, our Lord here denies to them the name, thereby taking from Jew thenceforth its old literal meaning, and confining it to a higher sense."

Suppose Mr. G. were to say he was a "Futurist"! [We know he is not; but,] strange to say, he *would be a literal Futurist!* but being a "Presentist" in very truth, we should deny him the name of Futurist, taking from Futurist thenceforth its old literal meaning, and confining it to a higher sense (of Presentist?)!

A writer must indeed be driven to straits when his examples serve him in this fashion. He can reason well enough on points that admit of reason, but the effort to prove black is white must leave the best of reasoners in an undignified position.

We see now why "Jew" was so carefully placed between two undoubted symbols. It was that he might come under the grasp of the next sentence.

"These explanations and indications at the commencement of this prophecy, are like a Divine warning against the error of taking these Jewish emblems literally. In the Apocalypse they must uniformly be interpreted as *signs of other things.*"

Mr. G. is not quite comfortable with the conclusion he has come to, so he goes to justify his conclusion; and thus falls into the common misfortune of making bad worse.

He continues:

"In every part of Scripture it is the Spirit, and not the letter, that is life and light giving; how especially must this be the case in a part where the letter, that is the outward form and expression of the truth, is so mysterious, so enigmatical, so unspiritual, as in the Apocalypse." (Page 106.)

What? The words dictated by the Lord Jesus unspiritual? Mysterious and enigmatical they may be to one who sees "hereafter" fulfilled before "the things that are" are concluded; but unspiritual they cannot be, either in outward form or inner meaning. Smyrna—one of the instances quoted about Jews, and Philadelphia, the other—both say: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the churches; and so Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea. Besides, John was IN THE SPIRIT before he could hear or see or write anything about the churches. Again, he was IN THE SPIRIT when taken up to heaven to see transactions on earth. He was IN THE SPIRIT to see Mystery Babylon. IN THE SPIRIT to see the Holy Jerusalem descend out of heaven from God. Truly we have a solemn instance here how a man who loves the Lord Jesus, as many parts of his book testify; can thus commit himself, when he forces Scripture to take his teaching, instead of getting his from it.

The employment of Symbols by the Spirit of God is a great boon to a spiritual mind. A hard literal fact, like a pointed Hebrew word, is limited to one use and no other; whereas in a symbol I get the whole nature and system of a thing; and the Spirit of God can expand or contract its use to my heart, conscience, or intelligence in a thousand different ways. Take Babylon as a symbol, and Babylon as a literal city. As a symbol, I get a vast system of iniquity, idolatry, priestcraft, witchcraft; in fact, every form in which *deceit* could be instilled by the devil into the minds of men; from the Flood, down to the Alleluia of Rev. xix. 1, 2. But if I take Babylon in a literal way, my mind travels to a broad-walled city on the Euphrates, whose vast power was crippled by the Medes and Persians in 538 B.C., and there it stops. The Spirit of God may sometimes speak of one, sometimes of the other; but He expects me to have sufficient intelligence by His gracious presence in me, to be able to discern whether symbol, or literal use is intended. We have no difficulty in our ordinary conversation in the use of symbol or literality. If I say a man has come to the end of his tether, no one doubts that I mean the exhaustion of his resources. But if I speak of a horse at the end of his tether, every one knows I am speaking of a

literal rope which secures the animal to one feeding-ground. If I refer to the modern Babylon, no one accustomed to the language of ordinary literature would dream of any other place than London. And if such a person said there was no Babylon in these days, we should smile at his extreme simplicity, and cite him as one not up to date. Mr. Guinness (page 102) speaks of the meagreness of metaphor and allegory. It might be so if we were to look for the identical hatchet that the savage said he had buried. But it would have a fulness of meaning to one who had fled before that same hatchet when its possessor was on the war-path. It is the ignorant who confuse symbols with things symbolized. It is as John says in his Epistle, "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because you *do* know it." You must have got the truth of a thing in you, before you know how to apply what is said about it. What should I know about a Lamb in the Revelation, did I not know in my soul the virtues of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world? The very mention of the word "Lamb" calls up before my mind the astounding virtues of redemption, whose wonders eternity will never be able to exhaust. Meagreness in that word of four letters! Why, the world could not contain the books that could be written on it! Then, when I find it used in connection with seals, and *not* with trumpets and vials; it opens up a train of reflection as to the staying mercies of the first series of judgments, as compared with the more severe trumpets, and the unsparing vials. It is with a sigh of relief, after having lost sight of the Lamb during the trumpets and the vials, the casting down from heaven of Satan, and the uprising of the two beasts; to find the blessed Name once more standing at the head of the fourteenth chapter. Of course, I know who He is, and far better than if He said, as He will in chap. xxii. 16, "I, Jesus"; because under the title "Lamb" I know what phase of His wondrous attributes is in exercise. So, again, take the mighty angel standing at the head of the 10th chapter. I know who He is, though He is not seen as the Lamb. To faith He can never be hid. (Mark vii. 24.) He may go to the coast of Tyre and Sidon; go into a house and would have no one know; but a Gentile woman will discover Him and get what she wants; taking no

rebuff, but routing the devil on his own ground. And so it is always. Flesh and blood does not reveal Him; but the Father knows Him, and He will take up a poor wretch out of a hot-bed of idolatry, where "that woman Jezebel" came from, and rejoice the heart of His Beloved in a weary land.

Symbols, therefore, are no sign of poverty of language, but of overflowing richness of grace, which hide gigantic mysteries from the wise and prudent, and reveal them unto babes. "Half-civilized," if you please; wholly savage, if you will. What matter! If it seems good in the Father's sight to glorify His Son thus, who shall stay His hand? Who shall say, "What doest thou?"

But to take a plain designation like "Jew," "Israel," "Hebrew," and make a symbol of it, is, as Job says, to "meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noon-day as in the night." If I saw a veritable son of Japheth acting like a son of Shem, with the Decalogue over his head, and standing at a place *he* calls an altar, and usurping the place of Moses by speaking to the people "the words of this law"; what could I say to him (if the law of the land permitted me to say anything)? Would it not be to this effect? "You say you are a Jew? You are not. You do lie. The Lord will make you of the synagogue of Satan if you take this false position in the things of God. And the Lord will make some of those people that you taught to cry, 'Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law,' to tell you the plain truth; and you will have eventually to confess that the Lord loved those poor people, and delivered them from your lies."

This would be far nearer the truth than the Lord "taking from '*Jew*' its old literal meaning and confining it to a higher sense."

But we must not refer to Philadelphia only. Perhaps, though Mr. G. coupled the two texts together, his remarks were written without the Smyrna text before him. We could not have used the same words about the same evil-doers at that earlier stage of the church's career. Smyrna gives us the origin of that, which in Philadelphia is seen in full blow. There can be little doubt that Irenæus, pious man as he was, pressed unduly, what all the fathers at the beginning of the

second century were ripe for, viz., the exaltation of the bishop and elder, no doubt wishing to reduce the laxity of the churches to better order. But one has only to read between the lines of the Acts and the Epistles to see that the devil was using Judaism to nullify and destroy its total contrast the church, and to bring its heavenly calling down to an earthly level. Philosophy and heresy, no doubt, did much to corrupt the church, and lead her to join hands with the world; but the order of the clergy, and all that belongs to it, is founded on the Jew's religion. Many were persuaded then, as many have thought since, that Christianity is a *continuation* of Judaism, instead of being its complete *contrast*; and indeed the Epistle to the Hebrews was written to *shew* its contrast; and that not by exhibiting one force *opposed* to another force, but to teach the great truth that all the wondrous types and shadows under which God was pleased to open His mind to man were mystic, incomplete, and unsatisfactory, until the great Antitype should come. That then, Judaism, which had already waxed old, should vanish away. The great effort of the adversary was first to destroy the Antitype. Failing utterly in this, he tried to maintain and sustain that which, in God's purpose, was to vanish away. The Acts show us how relentlessly the Apostles of the church were driven to prison and to death. After they were gone, grievous wolves from without, and men speaking perverse things from within; very soon swamped the truth with Judaism and Babylonianism (called Orientalism then). Judaism first did its deadly work in Smyrna; and Babylonianism, in its double form of Balaamism and Nicolaitanism, in Pergamos; thus preparing the way for Jezebelism (which is Babylonianism in full blow), in Thyatira. But Smyrna is our theme at present, and Judaism its special form of corruption; as any one may learn from Bingham. (*Antiq. Chr. Ch.* vol. i. page 42.) He admits that the common priesthood of believers is taught in the New Testament; but that the Fathers, from the earliest times, formed the church on the Jewish system.

What wonder then that He, "whose eyes are as a flame of fire" (Rev. i. 14), tells John to write to the angel of the church in Smyrna and say, "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

Now can Mr. G. be right in saying (page 105, 6):

“The parties alluded to clearly were literal Jews, but being unbelievers, our Lord here denies to them the name, thereby taking from ‘*Jew*’ thenceforth its old literal meaning, and confining it to a higher sense.”

The Lord says, SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN. Is that a higher sense?

Ah, Christian reader, and you, Mr. Guinness, among them; see how the evil influences that began so early, have continued so late! See how the springs of Christianity were poisoned so early, and how the virus still dements us all! Do not think I take any other ground than that of “a debtor to mercy alone,” that I was rescued from that system of error. Do not think I consider any place higher than the dust adequate to any of us who have contributed to bring Christendom to the fearful condition in which it is found at this moment. We may well be looking for the Lord to come and take us out of the awful confusion we have brought the church into. We do not mend matters, nor justify our own defections, by reviling the Harlot. We were called to “shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.” (Phil. i. 14.) Lights: not ordinary lights, but the same light like unto a stone most precious that is given off by the Holy Jerusalem that John saw descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. The word is only used twice in the Scriptures, and it shews thus what was expected of us. The Harlot never could have had the footing she has, had we maintained the truth. Darkness cannot exist in the presence of light.

This leaven of Judaism, then, is what is ruining the testimony of devout and earnest men like Mr. Guinness and the late Mr. Elliott. I may take up the words of the Preface (xv.) and say,

“With all earnestness and sobriety of mind they assure their brethren that it is their deep conviction that *this is the testimony of sacred scripture*; yet

[they and]

multitudes of Christian teachers, without even taking the trouble of examining into the subject, still preach the contrary

[of the scripture],

or imply it in their preaching; not from well-grounded conviction of its truth, but from educational prejudice or mere force of habit. Is this right? Ought not every minister of the word to study for himself the teachings of scripture until he is satisfied that he has attained the truth on this momentous theme?"

From not being able to divest himself of this leaven of Judaism, Mr. Guinness has written a great book which deflects the hopes and interests of the Church of God into that nearly finished sewer, "the times of the Gentiles." It is a good thing that "the Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. ii. 19), but it is very much to be hoped that before the Lord makes the selection of those who are to be caught up, "every one that nameth the name of the Lord will depart from iniquity," else He will say to such, "Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity." It is the same word that is used in Rom. i. 18, of "men who hold the truth in *unrighteousness*." We are accustomed, from the polluted stream through which we struggle daily, to regard "iniquity" as moral evil only; but this in Scripture is invariably expressed as wickedness, and by the same kind of word that designates the wicked one; whereas iniquity is the religious form of evil; that speaks of preaching, or prophesying, or casting out devils; and yet, for all that, is disowned by Him.

These are painful things to write about, but better now than when too late. It is the *truth* that delivers from every form of evil, and the truth consists in saying and doing what God says. If the Lord, after hanging nearly six hours on the cross, was yet solicitous that the one remaining scripture which expressed His thirst, should not pass unnoticed; what care does it behove us to take, lest we elbow our own opinions into an effete Christendom instead of the life-giving words of a life-giving God! The attitude of Jeremiah becomes us. He says to the Lord (xv. 16): "Thy words were found of me, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." And what says the Lord in reply? (xv. 19): "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth: let them return to thee; but return not thou unto them."

It is a solemn reflection that *truth* held in *unrighteousness* is sure to dishonour the Lord, even where there may be no per-

sonal intention or wish to do so. Peter makes out his Lord to be a stranger to Israel, by admitting that his Master paid tribute; but this is as nothing compared to the horror of saying that "the prince that shall come" is MESSIAH (page 713). Messiah is cut off (Prince though he is), and gets nothing. Then the *people* of the Prince that shall come, destroy the city and the sanctuary. If the people of the Prince that shall come were the Romans, is the *Prince* that shall come other than a Roman? Was the Lord a Roman? How, indeed, can he that makes a covenant for one week, and then in the middle of the week breaks it, be the Lord? Does our Lord break any covenants? Does He even make or confirm any? The very thought of such a thing is to upset the magnificent grace of God, and to set up Judaism again on its own ruins, in order to identify, at any cost, the heavenly church with the times of the Gentiles! Truly said the blessed One, "If *another* shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." This false theory receives him in advance, by making out the "desolator" to be Messiah.

People may well ask (page 717):

"Why are the Jews and Jerusalem altogether excluded from Mr. Guinness' theory?"

Hear Mr. Guinness in reply:

"The answer is simple. They are not excluded; on the contrary, they fill a very large place. The past history and future restoration of the Jews occupy most prominent positions in the pages of inspiration. But in prophecies of events to take place during the course of 'the times of the Gentiles' or present age, the Jews are to a large extent overlooked. They are the natural branches of the olive tree, but they are for the present 'broken off.' They knew not the day of their visitation, and the kingdom of God is for the present taken from them and given to others. Blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until* the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and then all Israel shall be saved. Hence the great antichristian power, symbolized as 'the little horn,' and called the 'man of sin'; and the eighth head of the beast, being the last form of Gentile power, and belonging to these 'times of the Gentiles,' has little to do with the literal Israel, or the literal Jerusalem, or the literal Temple."

Hear what is "noted in the scripture of truth" (Dan. xii. 1.)

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Hear the Lord Jesus on the same subject (Mark xiii. 19):

"For in those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days. And then if any man shall say to you, "Lo, here is Christ," or, "Lo, He is there," believe him not; for false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."

In the above scripture the Lord describes, in the most thrilling language, the terrors of that day of retribution for Israel's wickedness. Mr. Guinness can discourse with "a light heart" on "the future restoration of the Jews"—

"The Jews are to a large extent overlooked"—

and is so enamoured of "the times of the Gentiles," that he will appropriate to them tribulation and everything connected with it.

"It has little to do with literal Israel, literal Jerusalem, or literal Temple."

What an infatuation! first to confound the church of God with "the times of the Gentiles," then to appropriate all Judah's fearful sorrows into the times of the Gentiles. How cheap! if it is all nearly past. How dear! if it has all yet to come, in its concentrated form, within the compass of seven years. Do not sneer at the shortness of the crisis period. Except those days *had* been shortened, no flesh would have been saved. All this is, like Mr. Elliott's interpretation of the end of Rev. vi., to be the downfall of Paganism in the fourth century! All these cheap estimations of God's dire judgments, by a system that regards them as past; take off that restraining influence on man's wickedness that they were intended to exercise; and cause men to scoff and jeer at that, which they are informed can never

touch them, having had its fulfilment years before they were born!

The providential dealings of God during the times of the Gentiles *may, perhaps*, have been framed on the lines of the Apocalypse. God is Sovereign Ruler, I know, and nothing can happen without His permission. But the Book of Job shews me at least this: that Satan can get that permission both as to Job's property and person. I see no reason to doubt that he who would travesty the bride of Christ by the harlot church could also travesty the Apocalypse itself, so as to bring about that fearful manifestation of himself as God. Satan is the god of this age (2 Cor. iv. 4), and his function is to blind the eyes to the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. It is, therefore, quite conceivable that he could so fashion the times of the Gentiles on the lines of the Apocalypse, as to make men believe that *providential* matters were *prophetic fulfilments*. As to solar and lunar cycles, he is hardly likely to be ignorant of them; seeing the instruction he gave to the Egyptians and Babylonians; and that their idolatrous practices were all based upon the motions of the heavenly bodies. The church of God (as such), refuses to identify herself with these things under the sun; seeing it is not her sphere at all. She belongs to the heavenly places, where Christ sits at the right hand of God; a sphere where times and seasons—solar, lunar, or stellar—have no place as time measurers. I fully admit their wonderful character. If they are all that Mr. Guinness says they are, and I see no reason to doubt it; they are far more wonderful than they have received credit for; but they can contribute nothing to God's truth, but, alas! the very reverse. If Mr. Guinness's Christianity were not so leavened with Judaism, he would never have allowed them to take the immense place they have with him. The leaven of Judaism has deadened and blunted spiritual perceptions as to the high dignities and destinies of the church of God; which he has, by means of times and seasons, degraded to the corrupt level of the times of the Gentiles. I do not know any educational course so suitable to form a thorough "earth-dweller" as the work of Mr. Guinness. On the other hand, the only thing that will preserve one whose citizenship is in heaven, is the pure word of God. I have to bear in mind that not only

did our Lord Jesus Christ give Himself "for our sins," but that He might deliver us from "this present evil age"; and that both were "according to the will of God and our Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever." Amen.

The few pages thus feebly presented, are but to call readers to examine what they read by the word of God. A volume as large as Mr. Guinness's might be written on the multiform chain of error. But it is not good for writer or reader to engage in these augean pursuits. We need *positive* teaching concerning the multi-coloured glories of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we are so soon to see face to face.

Note.—It was intended to give a rapid sketch of the Book of Revelation, presenting its salient features; but it would have been difficult to do it justice within the limit of this pamphlet. Any person interested in the divisions of the book will find them set forth in *The Revelation of Jesus Christ** in the same order as in the word of God, but detached, so that one may not be confused with another. Interesting subjects, some from the Book of Revelation, are put forth in a portable form in small booklets called "Prophetic Series" from time to time, and are announced in a monthly circular.

* The author publicly disavows emolument directly or indirectly from the publication of his own or any other works on the momentous subject of the Lord's return; but anyone interested in the further pursuit of sound literature thereon, may obtain a list of works by persons known and unknown to the author, and which have been carefully read by him, by sending stamped and addressed envelope to the publisher, who himself has no interest beyond the truth, and the per-centage by which publishers live. Should profit beyond this result, it will be employed to cheapen or extend the knowledge of the Lord's return. The author need hardly say, that while approving and helping on the dissemination of the scriptural views of others, he must in no wise be held thereby to endorse them absolutely; each reader needs to weigh *before God* all ministry, irrespective of the ministrant. *God's own word alone being absolutely free from error.*