

## The Coming of the Lord and the Translation of the Church

{An attempt to answer the questions, "May the coming of the Lord be expected immediately? and Will the translation of the church be secret?"}

By George J. Walker. London: Whittaker & Co.}

J. N. Darby.

<11010E> 177

Direct testimony to the existence of a Jewish remnant with Jewish hopes, sanctioned of the Lord, having been published elsewhere, and the doctrine of the church also having been briefly brought out, as connected with the Lord's coming, the object here is to examine, in a supplementary notice, some difficulties which a serious mind might find in the suggestions of those who oppose the rapture of the church. It is true that if the statements of Scripture be adequately weighed, and the truths which have been drawn from it received into the heart, the answer to all these difficulties is already possessed; or if we be unable to explain these objections, they have no force against the direct proofs Scripture gives of the truth, save to prove our own incapacity to solve them.

Thus it is insisted on, in the pamphlet before us, pages 13, 14, that we wait with the world for the appearing of Christ." In 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-4, after speaking of the day of the Lord coming on the world as a thief in the night, the apostle adds, 'But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.' The natural inference being, that the day of the Lord will come simultaneously upon the world and the church; only it will find the latter prepared for it, while it will be destruction to the former." Now, take the plain expression of one passage which sums up the declarations of many, "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." It at once shews that, whatever may be the divine reasons for referring us to the Lord's appearing, as a time of blessing, or in connection with our responsibility (and Scripture does both), it is perfectly certain that it is not meant that we shall not be with Christ before He appears, nor that we shall be personally on earth as others are, so that He will appear to us and the earth at the same time. This we know to be false doctrine; because the word tells us that we shall then appear, or be manifested, along with Him.

178 But we learn more as to the teaching of those who would persuade us of it. The aim of that teaching, its direct and necessary tendency, is to destroy our distinctive relationship with Christ, and to connect us with the world, reducing us to the lowest possible level of hope which can be true for one who is not actually lost. Our proper heavenly connection with Christ is lost. This aim is accompanied by so obvious a loss of all spiritual intelligence, such an obliteration of the positive teaching of Christ and the Holy Ghost, that it becomes at once evident, to those not under its influence, what its source is.

Nor can anything be more groundless than the special objections. The first is a very favourite one of this school "It [i.e., the view combated] takes away from us our direct and full interest in considerable portions of the gospels, and almost the whole of the Apocalypse; for these are regarded as strictly and properly belonging only to certain parties, Jews and Gentiles, which will come under the divine dealings after the removal of the church," etc. (pages 5, 6). To talk, then, of robbing us of much in the gospels and the Apocalypse is, we repeat, the more absurd, since the special privilege of the heavenly saints is to know what does not concern them. In virtue of this, they are "friends," not because of having external signs given. To encourage the weak faith of the tried Jewish remnant they were really given, as will appear more clearly when we come to examine Matthew 24, and kindred Scriptures. But it is a hollow and false principle that the gift of a revelation to any one implies that he will be in the circumstances described: least of all is it true of the church, to which all Scripture is

given. But thence to argue that we must be there, that this or that prediction is about us, is as unreasonable as contrary to fact. Yet ought the church to have an understanding of all, for "we have the mind of Christ." The Lord's grace communicates to us what concerns others, and sometimes that we may intercede for others. Thus it was with Abraham: the Lord revealed to him what did not concern himself. Did Abraham lose by the Lord's communicating to him what concerned Lot? or would he have gained by imagining that it was about himself? Was Enoch worse off than Noah because the one declared what was coming on the world, not on himself, and was translated before there was a sign of the judgment, while the other received a warning of what concerned the circumstances he was in, so that, moved with fear, he gave heed and was saved through the deluge of waters? So with the church in the Revelation. None can deny that there is absolute silence as to the church (we do not say saints) on earth when the terrible judgments, symbolised by seals, trumpets, and vials, issue from the throne. Churches are spoken of before Revelation 4, and they are addressed after the visions close in Revelation 22. For no doubt the church ought to be the vessel of divine testimony as to what is coming, as Enoch was, and ought to be in the place of intercession, as was Abraham; but the church is outside the scene of judgment in the Revelation, as both these types were in Genesis.

179 But the second objection surrenders, in fact, the principles of which the first complains so loudly; for it is owned, though it seems reluctantly, that there are passages in the gospels (and so much the more in the Revelation) where the apostles are not our representatives. Thus, while we are privileged to profit by Matthew 10, it is plain that the commission there given is, in important respects, the reverse of our service as Christians now. It is only through the Holy Ghost enabling us to compare aright scripture with scripture, that we can discern what concerns a Jewish remnant of old or by and by, and that which describes or supposes our position. The author asks somewhat triumphantly in page 7, "Do they represent us, and listen for us, at the sermon on the Mount, at the last supper, at the concluding discourse in John; and yet represent another set of people in Matthew 24, and Luke 21? Are we on church ground with Martha and Mary at Bethany; and in company with the Jewish remnant when we place ourselves with the disciples on the Mount of Olives? (Matt. 24: 3)." Now, so far are the distinctions in question of an arbitrary nature that the argument used to expose them demonstrates their reality. For imbedded in the sermon on the Mount are words of our Lord which apply far more closely to Jews or the remnant than to the church. (See Matt. 5: 25; 6: 12, 13, 33, etc.). And as to the prophetic discourses in Matthew 24 and 25, it carries on its front and within its own compass, the clearest evidence of these distinctions. For in the early part the Lord speaks of the temple and its destruction, of the abomination of desolation, with express reference to a prophecy which professedly relates to the Jews and the remnant up to the last days. But this is not all. What has this character and is connected with Jerusalem, Judea, and that nation, is plainly distinguished from the parables which relate to Christians during the absence of the Lord (viz., the household servant, the virgins, and the talents). These last are not Jewish, but in some respects in marked contrast with what precedes, as well as with the closing sketch in Matthew 25 which gives the Lord's dealings with the Gentiles on His return as King. To deny these distinctions, then, is ignorance, and nothing better.

180 Nobody affirms that the church existed as a fact at the last supper in Jerusalem, or when the Lord uttered His discourses, etc., in John 13-17, or at Bethany; but it is abundantly clear that these scenes contemplated much which was afterwards verified in the church, and outside the remnant, while the remnant had special provision for it made in Luke 21. Nothing simpler than what the writer seeks to mystify.

Again, in this late defence of the system which denies the distinct portion of the church and its rapture previous to the Lord's appearing, the time of vengeance in which even the Jewish remnant is

desired to flee - the time of visiting the unbelief of the nation with anguish and trouble unheard of; in a word, the most awful chastisement for unfaithfulness the world ever saw - is confounded with the privilege of suffering for Christ by faith! "A further objection to it is the extraordinary result, that the church will be removed from the earth at the very time of all others when we should think its testimony would be most needed, and when suffering will be most glorious [!]. Surely, of all others, the church of Christ is best fitted to be confronted with the great Antichrist and his followers. Strange, indeed, should its martyrology break off at that critical period! Strange if tribulations, closely linked in the apocalyptic visions with the brightest glories of heaven, should be reserved for another than that body, which for nearly two thousand years has been associated in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ!" (Attempt, page 7.) Can ignorance of God's ways be shewn more painfully than this confusion of suffering with Christ, and suffering fearful penalty for having slighted Him and His will?

The last of these general presumptions is that Scripture intimates delays and impediments to the coming of Christ (pages 7, 8); and it is argued, that if to know what shall befall others be a privilege, still more what personally affects ourselves. Can anything exceed the blindness here manifested as to what spiritual privilege is? Is knowing what applies to ourselves the proof that we are friends of God? After Abraham had promises relative to himself and his seed, the Lord says, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" And what did He make known to him? What concerned himself? No; but what concerned Lot, of which there was no need. Lot heard in due time what concerned himself. So, says the Lord, in a scripture which the writer cites in the same paragraph, "I have called you friends, for whatsoever I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." I tell a man what concerns himself as a matter of business or duty; I tell my friend what my heart is interested in, whether it concerns him or not, because he is my friend. (Compare Eph. 1: 8-10.) How entirely this system destroys spirituality and divine intelligence!

181 And here we would say a word on the practical effect as indicative of the real character of these views. We are told that it is impossible rightly to be expecting the Lord from day to day; and this because all the predicted signs must first come to pass. Now, we ask any serious Christian, if this be not in direct contradiction of all the teachings and warnings of Scripture (those passages excepted whose proper application is in debate)? Does the Lord direct us to be habitually waiting and watching always for Him? Be it Christian or Jewish remnant that it refers to, does He not insist earnestly upon it? and that in such an hour as those He addresses think not, the Son of man cometh?

Further, the whole order of God's dealings is subverted. "We do believe the church and the remnant to be on earth together," etc. (page 39). That is, they believe that the full explicit revelation of the church, wherein is neither Jew nor Gentile but all one, and a recognition, on the part of God, of a body of persons as to whom He sanctions hopes exactly contrary to this (furnishing inspired terms for the expression and encouragement of them), will go on together on the earth. As an analogy to this, the state of the disciples during Jesus' life, and the condition of the church afterwards, and the case of the disciples of John (Acts 19), are brought forward. That is, the progress of the same saints out of Jewish thoughts into a church standing by the coming of the Holy Ghost, in the former case, and the instant cessation of the Jewish state of hope because of the Christian revelation, when it came to their knowledge, in the other, are alleged to be analogous to the simultaneous sanctioned subsistence of the two contradictory states at the same time. The value of the reasoning here is a specimen of the superficiality of this publication.

182 Another sample of the extreme levity and carelessness of the writer is this: "To say that while we are here, it [the Apocalypse] is of use to us, is to plead for a very secondary concern in it" (p. 6). The view of the writer is that its warnings are to be of use to the church when it is in the

circumstances referred to. Is it not evident, then, according to the author's theory, that this destroys its usefulness as to at least eighteen hundred years and more of the church's history? The necessity of being in the time of its fulfilment to make it useful, destroys its constant use for the church; whereas the knowledge of its application to a body traversing the time of trial, after the church's rapture, makes its usefulness apply to all, though its accomplishment is for others. If men must be in the circumstances to render it useful, the Apocalypse has had, on the author's shewing, no utility yet. 2 Peter 1: 19, which he quotes, is strongly against his arguments, besides being altogether misinterpreted. The point here is the excellence of the prophetic word as a lamp, till a light still better dawns on the heart. The apostle does not mean till the day of the Lord actually come upon the world, but till the heart is imbued with daylight, and the morning star arise therein (i.e., till the saint is awakened to the heavenly hope, apart from the events of prophecy).

The parable of the tares of the field (Matt. 13) is the first of the special scriptures adduced as positively adverse. "'Both grow together until the harvest' (v. 30); a statement clearly decisive of the whole question, for unbroken certainty cannot possibly be more plainly expressed" (page 9) . . . "and at one definite point of time, the harvest, or the end of the age" (page 10). The short answer is, that the harvest is *not* one definite point of time. "In the time of harvest," it is written, "I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." First do this, and then that. In other words, it is a period in which different events take place, the order and meaning of which is exactly what is in question. It is also alleged (page 9), that "gathered together" is the same as "rooted up." But it is no such thing: quite a different word is used for rooted up. Again, "gathering together," or up, is said to be removal from the field by reaping or plucking up, that is, the end of present existence - a very singular explanation. We all know such is not the effect of reaping. The removal of the wheat from the field is expressed in quite a different way. Indeed the tares are never said to be removed from the field at all, and notoriously, if we turn to the thing prefigured, they will be judged in the field when the harvest comes, and to this the parable looks on. In truth, the subject is the field, as to which there is one only exception - "Gather the wheat into my garner." The thorns, we read elsewhere, will be utterly burned in the fire in the same place. The tares are gathered together to be burned - clearly declaring that the gathering together is not the final judgment.

183 Further, none can read the parable and its explanation without seeing that they describe different scenes, as is always the case in such prophetic statements, because public results before men explain what is parabolically stated when the results are not there. Thus, gathering the wheat into the garner is not shining forth as the sun, nor is gathering into bundles to be burnt the same as gathering out of the kingdom and casting them into the fire. Note here, that the uniform testimony of Scripture is that the saints will appear, or be manifested, when Christ appears for judgment. (Col. 3; Rev. 17: 14; chap. 19.)

Hence the gathering the wheat into the garner must be before the gathering evils out of His kingdom and casting them into the furnace of fire. The making the heavenly saints to remain on earth while the judgment is being executed, is against the universal statement of all scripture. And this is what is alleged. For if the gathering the tares in bundles to be burned be the same as their final burning (an allegation indeed manifestly absurd), then their complete judgment takes place before the saints are taken into the garner; "the end of present existence" as regards the tares is before the saints are with Christ. Further, the righteous shining forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father is clearly not in the present age, which the harvest of judgment closes. It is the new age, while the gathering into the garner is part of the harvest or end of this age. The harvest, then, or end of the age, is certainly not one point of time. The Lord Himself states a "first" in what happens. The only question then is, Does the rapture of

the saints take place before the execution? All Scripture answers, Yes. They come with Christ to judgment: they appear with Him in glory. The order of the parable and its explanation is, first, gathering the tares in bundles, then the wheat is put into the barn; and when it comes to the execution of judgment the tares are gathered out of the kingdom and burnt, and the righteous shine forth as the sun.

184 One point of the old system is avoided. It used to be maintained that when Christ rose up from the Father's throne the present age closed. But the parable of the tares described the end of this age. Hence the judgment of the earth was before Christ came at all, and the catching up of the saints too. The absurdity of this was evident, and it is now avoided; but the elements of the error remain - only concealed. The harvest is made one definite point of time as the end of the age. If it be not Christ's rising up, it must be the moment of His executing judgment which closes it.

Where are the heavenly saints then according to Scripture? The wicked are punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. When this judgment is executed, are the saints still unchanged on the earth or already caught up? If still unchanged on the earth, and the resurrection yet to come, then is there a negative to all these statements together: "The Lord shall come with ten thousand of his saints"; "The Lord thy God shall come and all his saints with thee"; "They that are with him are called and chosen and faithful"; "The armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean"; "When Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." But Scripture declares these things positively. That is, the saints must have already been caught up to meet Him. But if so, the whole proffered explanation of the parable of the tares is false, and hangs on the blunder of interpreting the gathering of the tares together in bundles to be burned as meaning their actual burning, accompanied by the contradictory allegation that the harvest is one definite point of time. That anyone should not see clear on such points is evidently to be borne with. We are all ignorant on many points.

On 2 Thessalonians 2 the less may be said, because it has been already entered into in a previous paper.\* But it is well to note it as an additional specimen of this writer's reasoning. He says in page 15, "Surely the terrors of the day of the Lord are for His enemies, and the enemies of His people. How then could those terrors be present, and those enemies be unchecked in their cruel persecution of the Thessalonian saints? Could these saints have had such a notion?" Now the reasoning against the fact of the day's being there is most just. The only misfortune is that it is the apostle's own reasoning with the Thessalonians, because they thought the day was there, as Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 2: 2, and as the writer quotes Mr. Alford, explaining it in the same page. "Its object is to make it clear to them that the day of Christ . . . was not yet come."

{\*See "What Saints will be in the Tribulation?" page 110.}

185 As to what is insinuated on Daniel 7, and the endeavour to connect the Son of man with the kingdom after the blasphemies of the little horn, the way of putting the matter is incorrect, and, to say the least, the one-sided result of prejudice. For the account of the reception of the kingdom is not merely after the horn's blasphemies, but after the beast's judgment and destruction for those blasphemies. So that if it were just to apply the passage to the remaining of the church on earth during the whole career of Antichrist, the passage would equally prove that the church was on earth after the destruction of the beast. That is, the whole argument and application of the text is entirely groundless; for the heavenly saints come with Christ to judgment. The prophecy speaks of the earthly kingdom, first of the beasts, and then of the Son of man. The place or portion of the church is not touched on at all in the statement. It is the kingdom under the whole heaven; while the following explanation of the

prophecy (as all Scripture), declares that judgment is given to the saints of the Most High. It is but an additional proof how the whole tenor and bearing of Scripture is lost by such as maintain this system. If we enter into details, we shall find that the thrones were set before the judgment begins, and indeed in order to it.

As to the argument on Luke 19: 11-27, in page 11, viz., that we are not to look for the Lord as our immediate hope now, because there was a premature expectation of the kingdom during His ministry on earth, it has really no force, nor even sense. Some then expected Messiah to appear in glory and deliver Israel. The Lord shews that, being rejected, He must go to the Father, receive a kingdom and return, and that meanwhile His own servants were to serve Him. Does this prove that His servants are not to expect Him now more than the Jews then? Strange reasoning?

186 Passages, such as John 16: 2-4, which speak of trials and persecutions for the saints, need not be rested on. It was not the best, but one of the strongest reasons for looking for Christ continually, who was to take the saints out of trouble. The sufferings of the disciples would make them desire His coming.

If we turn to the epistles, another class of texts, to which reference is made (page 12), is that which involves responsibility in connection with Christ's appearing. In order to understand such passages as 1 Timothy 6: 14, some remarks are needed. The rapture of the church has nothing to do with responsibility; it is the fulfilment of the highest blessings of sovereign grace - Christ's coming to take us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. Now, none but Paul ever speaks of the church save the Lord Himself prophetically (Matt. 16, 18), or the historical facts that He added to it, etc., in the Acts. It was a mystery hidden in God; it is not named in the epistles but by Paul, for we do not speak of allusions to a local church or churches. Various privileges of its members individually may be, but however strange it may appear to some, in the epistles none ever speaks of the church itself, nor names it, but Paul. Hence none speaks of the rapture but he; for this is connected with its known privileges. Where the coming of Christ is spoken of elsewhere, it is spoken of as the time of judgment; or of the display of the effect of righteousness and of glory in the saints; or as a general expectation connected with the ways and government of God - a very distinct thing from the privileges conferred by sovereign grace. The judgment connected with Christ's coming includes the judgment of, and retribution to, the saints, because this is a part of His display of government, and not the portion of the saints given them in sovereign grace in Christ. By the deniers of what is called the "rapture," all this is mixed up together, for the counter-scheme is one of unmingled darkness.

Now, as regards the world, this manifestation for judgment is Christ's coming. The term coming, or presence, embraces all that passes in connection with His return from the moment of His entrance into the created universe, be it heaven or earth. As regards the world, His coming may be called His appearing, His manifestation, the appearing of His coming, or His revelation. It has all these titles. The saints joining Christ is never referred to anything but His coming; for when He appears, they appear with Him.

187 Do they not wait for and love His appearing? To be sure they do. This removes evil and destroys the power of evil on the earth; in this they appear with Him in glory. The whole display of God's glory in righteousness, and its fruit, blessing and power, takes place then; and those who groan under the sense of a creation subjected to the bondage of corruption rejoice in the thought of its deliverance. The entire scene will be changed by Christ's taking the power, Satan being bound, and the rule of goodness and righteousness established. The saint cannot but delight in the thought of the setting up of the kingdom, the glory of Christ, and the blessing of man and creation. That everything

should be ordered according to Christ's will is the joy of the heart. It is the time of the divine blessing in government. Oppression will cease, peace and true liberty will reign without evil, all God's promises be fulfilled, His goodness satisfied, and Christ glorified. As regards the government of this earth, it is what our hearts as we walk on it, and what we in our nature, as creatures belonging to it, must desire. We love His appearing - the rising of that Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings. That we shall not be those subject to this government, to the rightly taught soul, enhances the joy of it, though, on the principle of wretched selfishness, which characterises the system we are combating, this may seem to enfeeble its interest for us. On any ground, we shall not be the subjects of that government, because we shall be glorified.

But which is most blessed - the family in misery which is relieved, or he who has a share in relieving, and participates in grace in the joy of it? No properly ordered heart can doubt a moment. All love His appearing, for Christ will have His rights, and the dreary scene through which we pass will (blessed be God) brighten up under the rays of the Sun of righteousness, as a morning without clouds, as the clear shining after rain. As to our own portion, indeed, the appearing of Christ is the time of our being manifested in glory with Himself. But, doubtless, the loving His appearing looks to more than this. It is the substitution of the blessed reign of Christ for the power and dominion of Satan in a world which is God's, but now oppressed - the taking of His just place in the universe by Christ Himself.

188 But the being caught up to meet the Lord in the air is for our own proper and higher blessing; it is in order to be for ever with the Lord. There the apostle closes all he has to say to it. But in all that respects the government of God, the appearing or the manifestation of Jesus in this creation is the thing referred to. Hence our loving His appearing is a test whether we delight in His authority and the divine blessing, or whether we find our pleasure where Satan is prince. Hence also, when our responsibility is in question, as this relates to government and reward, the appearing is always referred to. Christ will take account with His servants as well as with the world. But the difference is in every way evident. We all go up together: there is no distinction. The life and righteousness of an apostle are the same as mine. We shall all be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren. But the Thessalonians will be Paul's crown, not ours; and every man will receive his own reward, according to his own labour. Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it.

Other objections are founded on the declaration that Peter would die (John 21: 18, 19; 2 Peter 1: 14-16); Paul's expecting his own death, and predicting evils that should arise, and especially in the last days. One thing is clear about Peter's death - it can have no possible force now. But this remark has not all its force, if we do not perceive that it required a particular revelation that a person was to die: otherwise it was said, "we which are alive and remain," and that by the apostle confuting this thought when it was in question; but of this anon. So the word "If I will that he tarry till I come" was interpreted. It required a particular revelation to point out a particular event as intervening, and when that has intervened, the general truth flows on in all its force. That is to say, the rightness of the general expectation is largely confirmed by a person's death, before Christ's coming, requiring a revelation to have it supposed possible. It was an event, too, which might have happened at any time after the church's expectation had in fact been fully brought to light. The only word at all applicable to delay even then is "when thou art old"; it is in comparison with "when thou wast young" - a proof he was no longer so - sufficiently vague to leave all open. But further, the church, probably, was very little or not at all cognisant of it. When Peter was in prison (Acts 12), they thought his death might well happen then. When Peter refers to it, he does so as imminent. As to the expression "after my decease," the expectation of the Lord's coming never enfeebled the most assiduous care of the church, while waiting

for Him, but just the contrary. Nor certainly can the case apply now. Again, what is more material to remark, it was never given as a sign to the church, but as a testimony to one individual. There is no proof that the church had the least knowledge of it before it was past. It certainly was not addressed to the church by the Holy Ghost before, for John's gospel was given after Peter's death - and this is the grand point.

189 As to the predictions of the last times, the case is even stronger; for the Holy Ghost has declared by John that they were come. That is, the expectation of Christ was constant then. The word of God gives us, in its own contents, the ground for constant expectation now, for it declares the last hour or time come before John was gone. At first, the expectation was constant; next, as time went on, and in fact faith and hope fuller, particular events were noticed as immediately imminent. Paul says, in Philippians 2: 17, that he was a victim on whom aspersion had been made already. Would this be ground for delaying hope or awakening it? Peter announces that his decease was just at hand, John that the last time was already there, and these are alleged as reasons why we should not expect Christ! None of the cases were ever given to the church in any sense as signs. Before the announcement was given to the church by John that Christ had said it to Peter, Peter was long dead and gone. No: they were no signs, and have no application at all now; and what came on to be revealed as a necessity for the church, for its seeing the evil of the last days, the Holy Ghost has taken care to tell us is arrived. How wise are the ways of God! He establishes, as a doctrine, the expectation. Particular revelations are given to individuals, and they speak of them only when they are close at hand, God knowing well that there would be this delay. When the church needs it, He warns them of evil and dangerous days, but takes care, before His instruction closes, to keep one there to tell us they were come. And this is alleged as a reason for our not waiting for the Lord! No: we must get down to another and an earthly hope before signs come in or are applicable to us. The virgins in the parable did sleep, and the saints have slept, but they went out to meet the Bridegroom at the first, and awaited nothing else: when divinely aroused at midnight, they were to go forth to meet Him, and not to await aught else but Him.

190 The case of the Thessalonians is exceedingly strong. They so expected Christ to come in their life-time that they were uneasy if a saint died. Paul relieves them from this anxiety by telling them the dead in Christ would be raised. But does he correct their expectation as an unfounded one, saying, Signs must be fulfilled, all should die, and I know not what? Far from it. He shews the dead will have part, but strengthens their hope and associates himself with it, saying, "We which are alive and remain." Unbelief and Satan may seek to divert from this; the Holy Ghost sanctions and insists on it when the question is raised.

Such are but a few of the proofs the publication affords of the absence of spiritual intelligence inseparable from the system it maintains, as well as of the utter futility of its reasonings. Hence it was not thought worth while to answer it, save briefly. It professes to review the question, but is little more than a re-assertion of Mr. Newton's prophetic theory, as it seeks also to accredit his "Thoughts on the Apocalypse." Now every reader ought to know that it is hard to say whether the absurdities or the blasphemies of that book are the more glaring, and that its system is inevitably identified with a false doctrine of as audacious dishonour against the Lord Christ as ever was known. Here are some of the proofs from the first edition, 1843.

Page 45, speaking of the elders it is said, "their eldership and proximity to the throne of the Most High, are sufficiently plain indications of their being called into participation of His counsels."

Pages 48 *et seqq.* "Nothing perhaps amongst all the attributes of God is more wonderful than this universality of present control, all the merely executive agents of His government being subordinate

thereto . . . it gives a view of almighty and omnipresent power more wonderful perhaps than the original power of creation, or that whereby He continually upholds that which He hath created. This power is at present possessed and exercised by the Lord Jesus . . . but His saints do not possess it yet . . . But since it is said in Scripture that we are the fulness of Him that filleth all in all . . . it cannot be doubted that the church will participate in this branch of His glorious power" - that is, have almighty and omnipresent power.

191 Page 51. "But there is yet another character of power which the church is to exercise in the glory. Admission into the counsels of God is represented by the throned elders - omniscient power of superintendence by the seven Spirits; but the execution of the will of God, and the omnipotent power necessary to such execution, is also committed to the redeemed. This is a third sphere of their glory. They are represented in it by the living creatures, or cherubim."

Thus, the church will be omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. Is not this open blasphemy? The last form of power, for which he refers to Ezekiel, is thus described: "Nowhere absent, but everywhere present, in the perfectness of undivided action: afford the mysterious but fitting symbol of the omnipotent agency of the power of Him, before whom all the inhabitants of the earth are reported as nothing," page 52. "And when we consider what the state of the earth will be when that period arrives . . . we may see the necessity for such a power, and the high calling of the church in being entrusted with its application to the circumstances of a terrified but delivered earth," pages 53, 54.

So in page 55, still speaking of the church as the cherubim, "as such will apply to the earth and to the universe the wisdom of the elders and the throne." "And although all that we have yet seen in this chapter appears to exalt the creature almost into co-equality with God, yet we find His due supremacy most carefully maintained. The glorious power of the cherubim does not prevent their giving all glory, and honour, and thanks to Him that sat on the throne; nor does the higher exaltation of the elders prevent them from falling down before Him that sat on the throne, and worshipping," etc. But can the nauseousness of blasphemy be carried farther than when, in ascribing omnipotence and omnipresence to the church as executive power, it is declared that they apply the wisdom of the elders and the throne, setting the elders (i.e., the redeemed) before God Himself? It would be hard to find, in the wide circle of what printing has given to the world, such pages as 48-55 of Mr. Newton's "Thoughts on the Apocalypse."

For recklessness of assertion, for self-contradiction, for pseudo-criticism, we might produce a host of examples, if need were. And this is the book sought to be anew accredited by the publication under review. We enter no further into its character here: but is it not painful to see a certain class of Christians greedily receiving this mass of unscriptural fancies and follies, which, alas! have an object behind them, viz., the blotting out of Christ's various glory, and the denial of the true place of the church as His body and bride? On the side of truth such a work would not have been borne an instant. It contradicts itself, parades bad Greek, details gross absurdities and bold statements, without the smallest proof; but all this fades away before the real blasphemies which we have noticed lying on the surface. One of the phenomena of the human mind is its disposition to receive error rather than truth. It likes error. And when imagination would be detected in a book pleading for truth, it is passed by in its most unbridled form, and even like when it is employed to teach error. It is a humbling fact. One only can deliver from its power.

192 The effort to re-accredit the "Thoughts on the Apocalypse," which contains such blasphemies, and identified as it is with yet worse, cannot be too strongly and earnestly denounced. It is perhaps not wrong to add that the attempt has been made by one who has distinguished himself by

another pamphlet written to prove the resurrection of brutes and dedicated to a dead cat. There is no wish to do more than allude to such a fact; but many things help us in judging how far the guidance of God's Spirit is with a man.