

Jewish and Christian Expectation of Christ Contrasted.

I am not without hope that, under the gracious teaching of the Spirit, the simple statement of the distinction we are going briefly to examine may be blessed to souls. Happy is it when we are brought to ponder on the riches of grace which God has lavished on us; and this in the spirit of children, not desiring to prove our own notions, but to learn the thoughts, purposes, and ways of God. Happier still when, in the communion of Him Who dwells in us, our delight is to be shown the various glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to adore.

His various glory, I repeat; for this the natural mind relishes not, but it is exactly what the Spirit loves and leads into (John 16: 13-15). Hence it is that to unbeliever the scripture is a blank without heights and without depths. The purity of its sentiments, and the simple grandeur of its style, may be allowed and admired. But there are no land-marks, no chart, no star of Bethlehem to direct and cheer the believer's way. His conscience is not in the presence of God, and therefore there is no true Christ in his heart. The Bible to him may be a very wonderful book, but that is all.

For professors of Christ is another snare. If it seem to be owned practically as that which reveals the divine way of salvation, almost every thing in it is made to bear on this one point. Warnings, threatenings, exhortations, invitations, instructions, commands, prayers, ordinances — nearly all that Old and New Testaments utter is made to converge on what, to the flesh, really amounts to this, God helping us by His Son and Spirit to save ourselves. From this quagmire God would mercifully extricate His people; has He not taught all His children with more or less intelligence to rest upon the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ? Then it is that the vast field of the written word opens apace: the different displays which God has made of His character; and the effect of these dealings upon believers and unbelievers in the several dispensations, summed up in the person of Christ, whether viewed once here below, now in heaven, or by-and-by returning again. Thus His child, led of the Spirit, grows in knowledge, and begins to see the revealed past, present, and future, in their just proportions, because he begins to learn all in Christ, Whose mind he has (1 Cor. 2). In other words, he is learning to prove the things which differ.

Now, it may be a narrow, but certainly it is an important, part of the things which differ, that is suggested by the title to this paper. Nor would I pretend to sketch minutely the ways in which the estimate formed by a godly Jew respecting Christ's advent is distinguishable from the hope set before the church in His future presence. Let us content ourselves with certain broad essential differences, which are nevertheless often confounded by Christians to the obscuring of their proper portion, and so far to the detriment of their souls. The testimony of scripture is so full and distinct that little reasoning is necessary; still its importance may well demand ample quotations.

The advent of a glorious Messiah to the earth was characteristically a Jewish hope. I speak not of traditional fables, but of the truths which the Jews saw and held fast in their scriptures. To such believing Jews, Messiah was the center and security of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; He was the accomplisher of all righteousness, blessing and peace in their land, Immanuel's land. By Him they expected to be saved from their enemies and from the hand of all those that hated them, that so they might serve the Lord without fear all the days of their life. He was to cut off all the horns of the wicked, and to exalt the righteous; to save Zion and build the cities of Judah, that they might dwell there and have it in possession, and thus the seed of His servants should inherit it, and they that love His name dwell therein.

This is plain in the Psalms as the character of deliverance pleaded by the Jewish remnant — not a rapture out of the earth, but a destruction of their enemies in it; a divine vengeance upon their enemies

on earth, not a gathering to Jehovah for heaven. They looked, and will look, for Jehovah to go forth and fight against the nations He will gather at the latter end against Jerusalem; they will look for His feet to stand upon the Mount of Olives, and Jehovah shall be King over all the earth. Then, with David their king over Israel, restored as it were, from the grave and Ephraim and Judah united perfectly and for ever under the rule of the true Beloved, they expect to dwell in their land, and the heathen shall know that God Jehovah sanctifies Israel when His sanctuary shall be in their midst for evermore. They might read of a Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, but their hope was the presence and reign of the Messiah here below, in special connection with the Jewish nation and land. The following texts will still more plainly show the truth we have been stating.

Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession; Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Ps. 2: 6-9).

For Jehovah the Most High is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet" (Ps. 47: 2, 3).

Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion; on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge" (Ps. 48: 1-3; 45; 47; 48.).

He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in his sight. And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be Jehovah Elohim the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen (Ps. 72: 4-19).

I need not go more minutely through the Psalms, beyond directing attention to Ps. 128., as evidently in accordance with the remarks already made. So also Ps. 132: 13-18. The inspired praises of Psalms 146-150 will then have their literal fulfilment. It is earthly joy under Messiah's dominion, and all is in unison with the thoughts, feelings, associations, hopes, and triumphs of His people Israel.

The prophets are equally explicit.

In that day shall the branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that

he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when Jehovah shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And Jehovah will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain (Isa. 4: 2-6).

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this (Isa. 9: 6, 7).

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together : and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And Jehovah shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt (Isa. 11: 4-16).

And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall punish the host of the high ones upon high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when Jehovah of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously” (Isa. 24: 21-23). “And in this mountain shall Jehovah of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is

spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall he take from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is Jehovah; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. For in this mountain shall the hand of Jehovah rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill” (Isa. 25: 6-10). “He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship Jehovah in the holy mount of Jerusalem” (Isa. 27: 6, 12, 13). “Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty ; they shall behold the land that is very far off. Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers? Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand. Look upon Zion, the city of our Solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Jehovah will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king; he will save us” (Isa. 33: 17-22).

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of Jehovah and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isa. 35: 1-10).

The whole of Isa. 60, 61, 62 are closely in point, but can only be referred to now.

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat

the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah (Isa. 65: 17-25).

Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of Jehovah shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. For, behold, Jehovah will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire, for by fire and by his sword will Jehovah plead with all flesh: and the slain of Jehovah shall be many" (Isa. 66: 10-16).

And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith Jehovah, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of Jehovah; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers (Jer. 3: 16-18).

Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that they shall no more say, Jehovah liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, Jehovah liveth, who brought up and who led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land (Jer. 23: 5-8).

To this we may add as most express, chaps. 31, 32, 33.

In Ezekiel, the reader may consult chaps. 16, 20, 36, 37, 39, 40-48; also Dan. 7, 8, 9, 12; Hosea 1, 2, 3; Joel 2, 3; Amos 9; Obadiah; Micah 4, 5; Hab. 3; Zeph.3; Haggai 2; Zech. 2, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14; and Mal. 3, 4.

Another distinction which may be briefly noticed is that the Jews had the revelation of outward circumstances and ordered dates whereby to regulate their expectations. We need do little more than refer to the communications of God made to Abraham in Gen. 15, as well as others subsequently, for illustrations of this.

Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance (Gen. 15: 13, 14).

Now it will not be disputed that the father of the faithful rejoiced to see Christ's day, and he saw it

and was glad (John 9: 56); but it was through, and at the end of, a long course of years and trying vicissitudes as regarded his seed. Abraham was in no way waiting for that day as if it might happen in his own life or shortly after. He was perfectly certain that the day of Christ could not come for some centuries at least. Full well he counted upon that day bringing in deliverance to his family, and hence, his joy. (See Gen. 49: 10). Again, passing over intermediate predictions, the word brought by Gabriel to Daniel is even more detailed and with chronological points of a very defined character.

Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined” (Dan. 9: 25, 26).

Hence it is plain that, if we suppose a godly Jew of that age to have understood the prophecy of the seventy weeks, he could not expect Messiah to come and be cut off till the expiry of nearly five hundred years. Ignorance might seek the living among the dead, but no believer with intelligence of this divine prediction could possibly look for the arrival and cutting off of the Christ previously to the revealed epoch. It would have been faith in him to have said, “I expect the Messiah after so many years, not before; for so hath the mouth of Jehovah spoken.”

With the church, on the contrary, the case is wholly different. Her hope is not the times of restitution of all things, but to be with the Christ in heaven as His bride; and as her hope is unearthly, so is it wholly unconnected with the times and seasons which characterized the expectations of Israel. Not that we are ignorant of these dates and epochs; but we know perfectly that the day of Jehovah so comes as a thief in the night — a day of destruction whence there is no escape. But we are not in darkness that that day should overtake us as a thief. We are already children of the day, and when the day arrives, we shall come with the Sun of righteousness Who ushers it in. We shall have been with Him before the day breaks; for we know Him as the bright, the Morning Star, and the morning star He will give to him that overcomes.

Certain times and seasons, as we all are quite aware, must precede the restoration of the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1). Thus we know that one week remains out of the seventy of Dan. 9, when the prince that shall come — a Roman prince — shall confirm covenant with the mass of the Jews for seven years. But, like another traitor and son of perdition, he shall put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him; he shall break his covenant (Ps. 55: 20). The covenant with death shall be disannulled (Isa.28). “In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.” This is followed by the abomination of desolation for its allowed term, “even until the consumption.” (Compare with Dan. 9; ch. 7: 19-26). “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. 24: 21). “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble: but he shall be saved out of it” (Jer. 30: 7). “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which 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” (Dan. 12: 1).

The church knows these revealed periods, but knows them as connected, not with herself, but with Jerusalem and the Jewish people, Daniel's people. The church does not wait to be gathered under a Messiah on earth, but to be caught up to meet Him in the air, and be ever with the Lord (1 Thess. 4); with Him in His Father's house; with Him when the successive judgments (symbolized by the seals, trumpets, and vials) are falling on the earth; with Him when the marriage-supper of the Lamb is

celebrated above; with Him when He wars with the beast and the false prophet; with Him, when we reign together for a thousand years; and with Him in the subsequent eternal state. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." Surely, it is a blessed hope that the appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ is to set to rights all things here below which are now out of course. Creation shall be delivered into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, and Israel be no longer blind but seeing. All Israel shall be saved, when the Redeemer comes out of Zion, and turns away ungodliness from Jacob. And if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles: how much more their fulness? If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?

If we look above, the long usurped possession of the air (Eph. 2: 2; Eph. 6: 12) shall be rescued from Satan and his angels; no longer shall he be permitted on high to accuse the brethren of Christ in the presence of God (Rev. 12); no longer will there be conflict with wicked spirits above. That old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, shall be bound and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, before the last vain struggle when he is thrown into the lake of fire.

But it is important to see that not any {any of these things} nor all these things are our proper hope, which is to be translated, and meet the Lord Himself in the clouds. As it is said in John 14: 3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Is this on earth, or in heaven? Is it merely the honors of a displayed kingdom? or is it not the nearer and higher intimacy of the Son of God in the home of the Father on high? The disciples did not ask, nor did the Lord indicate, dates or signs when their rapture should be.

But in the prophecy of Matt. 24 He does give the sign of His coming and of the consummation of the age. In then meeting the enquiries of the disciples from their own Jewish point of view, He enters into the general facts respecting Jerusalem and Judea, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, etc, which were but the beginning of sorrows. The end was not yet, which should not come before the gospel of the kingdom was preached in all the habitable earth for a witness to all the nations. From Matt. 24: 14 he describes the particular marks of the closing crisis up to His manifestation to all the tribes of the earth, and the complete ingathering of His elect (Jews) from the four winds. Of His elect earthly people this gathering must be, because when Christ, our life, appears, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. Thus the church and Christ are manifested at the same time in glory; whereas the elect described in Matt. 24 are only gathered after the Son of man's appearing, and cannot therefore be the church. All the context, the more it is examined, proclaims them to be Jewish disciples, who at the signal of the setting up of the abomination flee, and so escape the unparalleled tribulation of those lawless scenes of the end; for their simple trust is in the Man of God's right hand, "the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself." (Compare Ps. 79, 80.)

But, as we have seen before, the passage in John's Gospel has nothing to do with Jerusalem, or the earth, or earthly circumstances. John never speaks of a special tribulation for Jewish disciples at a particular time and place, but of the general tribulation we should count upon in the world at any time (John 16: 33). So His coming is not merely deliverance to a persecuted Jewish remnant on earth, but to receive us to Himself in heaven, without one hint of time, place, or circumstances, that we might ever wait for Him as our hope.

Doubtless the church is to reign over the earth, the bright witness of the Father's love; for the world shall then know that He loved her as He loved His Son, both being displayed in the same glory. And how blessed the ministry of the church in that day, serving the gladsome earth according to the grace which has called, kept, and glorified herself on high, the Bride, the Lamb's wife! We shall inherit the earth; we shall judge the world and angels too in that administration of the fulness of times, when all things shall be gathered together in one in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth;

even in Him in whom we also thus obtained an inheritance. Joint heirs with Him, we shall share all He will rule as the exalted Man. And God hath put all things under His feet. Though we do not yet see all things put under Him, we do see Himself exalted; and when the day arrives for Him to take the dominion, it will be manifested that He is head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

The Old Testament prophecies, it cannot be denied, are full of the earthly glory. In the New Testament we have the mystery of God's will made known to us, involving the inheritance of things in heaven as well as things on earth, and the church co-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ, as His body (Eph. 1: 9-14). No prophets of ancient times had ever uttered such thoughts. It is not merely that such a portion was not understood; but it was not even revealed. It was kept hid in God, and is now revealed, we are told, to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. The old prophets had spoken of times of refreshing from the presence of Jehovah, when Israel, or at least a Jewish remnant, repent and are converted; they had largely depicted the times of the restitution of all things, when Messiah comes from the heavens which now receive Him (Acts 3). No doubt they foretold the rule of the heavens (Dan. 4), and anticipated the joy and peace of the world under that kingdom.

But the old prophets, however inspired, never predicted, much less did any know, that Christ will have her who is His body and spouse associated with Him, and enjoying all His love and glory in the heavenly places; though they did celebrate the time when the land shall be married, and Jehovah shall make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. The bride they sing of, in the Canticles and the Psalms, is an earthly bride. Very different is the church of which Paul speaks in Eph. 5. Very different the marriage of the Lamb, of which John tells in Rev. 19, as far above the espousal of the Old Testament as the heavenly glory of Christ exceeds His earthly, though all be perfect in its place.

Further, be it noted that, whether it be deliverance in mount Zion and Jerusalem (Joel 2), whether it be judgment of the Gentiles in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3), with both we find wonders displayed in the heavens, and in the earth blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke; the sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. Nothing of the kind is ever connected in scripture with the catching up of the church, whose only sign is the descent of the Lord Jesus to summon her into His presence in the air. His descent, and the saints' consequent rapture, are nowhere described as events which the world is to behold. To them that look for Him Christ appears, but to none else, so far as scripture shows, until He is revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and those that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus. His public revelation, in order to judge, is called "the day of the Lord," "the appearing," etc.; and it is certain that many signs will precede that day, and His "manifestation" to every eye. The apostasy must be ripe, and the lawless one be without hindrance; and the great tribulation be, out of which comes the innumerable Gentile multitude of Rev. 7, as well as

the future unparalleled tribulation in Judea. But this is not all.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matt. 24: 29-31).

But I would not dwell further upon these points of contrast, only praying that we may remember day by day, that our place, the church's only right and befitting place, is to wait for Christ from heaven. It is not judgments that we expect to be in; it is not the hour of temptation we have to dread for

ourselves (Rev. 3: 10). Our business is to wait, as a heavenly Bride, for our heavenly Bridegroom. Those who link the church with earthly circumstances must be miserably disappointed: not so the hearts which the Spirit directs, animates, and sustains in the longing cry, Come, Lord Jesus. May it be so with us, brethren, increasingly as the moment, unknown to us, draws nearer! Amen.

The Bible Treasury, New Series, vol. 2.