

The doctrine of the cherubim: being an inquiry, critical, exegetical, and practical, into the symbolical character and design of the cherubic figures of Holy Scripture. By George Smith.

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THE
DOCTRINE OF THE CHERUBIM;

BEING
AN INQUIRY,

CRITICAL, EXEGETICAL, AND PRACTICAL,

INTO

THE SYMBOLICAL CHARACTER AND DESIGN OF THE
CHERUBIC FIGURES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

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PREFACE.

THE doctrine discussed in the following pages is of considerable importance in order to a correct understanding of many precious portions of holy scripture, as well as to the formation of a sound judgment respecting the typical character of some of the most prominent elements of the Mosaic ritual. Yet, although no biblical topic has obtained more frequent notice from eminent critics and scholars, it has happened that, except in the case of the Hutchinsonian controversy, all reference to the Cherubim has been of a casual or incidental kind. No writer—at least, so far as the author is aware—has directed his attention to the whole subject, and, by an investigation and comparison of all those passages of holy writ which relate to it, endeavoured to elicit the true character of cherubic symbolism. It is the design of the present essay to enter on this neglected inquiry.

If any one should feel disposed to charge with presumption this humble effort to cast light upon a subject which has called forth conflicting opinions from biblical scholars in every age of the Christian church, let him be informed that it was extorted

volume of his "Sacred Annals," recently published, while treating of "the History and Religion of the Hebrew People," some observations were made by him on the scriptural Cherubim, and the nature of their symbolism, which were not altogether in accordance with the opinions generally entertained. In consequence of this, the author received so many inquiries and applications for a further exposition of his views, that he was led to a careful and extended investigation of the whole subject; and, this being completed, the discussion appeared to him of sufficient importance to justify its publication. The present little volume has in consequence made its appearance.

Having said thus much concerning the origin of this effort, a few words may be added respecting the plan upon which it is written. It seemed, in the first place, necessary to glance at the subject generally, and to examine the authority upon which prevalent schemes of interpretation rest. This was accordingly done. In the second place, it was thought desirable to examine separately, and in a critical manner, every text in the Old and New Testaments which had reference to the subject. This being accomplished, it was found necessary to point out the connexion of the Cherubim with some of the leading elements of redemption; namely, the manifestation of the Divine Presence,—the Incar-

tures bearing on the Cherubim has a homogeneous character and meaning.

The investigation thus far having warranted the induction, that the Cherubim were intended to symbolize *the faithful*, this solution was applied in detail to the same class of scriptures, and shown to afford to each and all a consistent and satisfactory meaning: while a general review of the several branches of the argument in an evangelical aspect tended to confirm the conclusion which had been adopted, and to cast considerable light upon the import of many striking passages of sacred writ.

It cannot be concealed that this mode of treating the subject has given the essay an irregular and tautological appearance; the same scriptures being so frequently cited, and considered under different aspects, and for the several purposes already specified. Yet this inconvenience and defect, if such it be, has been advisedly submitted to, for the sake of showing, to the fullest extent, the accordance of the interpretation here adopted with the general scope and spiritual purport of every text relating to the point.

Whatever reception this little work may obtain from those qualified to pronounce an opinion upon it, the author will have the consolation of knowing that he has humbly and sincerely endeavoured to investigate the subject under the guidance of great evangelical principles, and in accordance with the analogy of faith. If he has succeeded, an important

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THE

DOCTRINE OF THE CHERUBIM.

THE revealed will of God is the noblest study for the mind of man.

Nature truly spreads before us a vast magazine of wonder and of beauty, which throughout all its endless variety proclaims the Creator's wisdom, power, and goodness. Science displays the grand code of physical and intellectual law, which the Divine Mind has impressed upon all existence. Both these means of knowledge invite attention, and demand research. Either of them, as it becomes the object of studious investigation, imparts a portion of its own light and beauty to the inquiring mind.

But the word of God offers to our contemplation a system of truth, wider in its range, higher in its sublimity, deeper in its infinite wisdom, than all which the world of nature, or the discoveries of science, can boast. Here we see the word of life, like a fountain gushing from the rock,—every

the Paradise of God. Here the weak and disordered vision of humanity is brought into connexion with the sunlight of heaven: not only are the being and character of God revealed, but also the intellectual and moral nature of man, ruined by sin, and blasted by guilt; the grand scheme of mercy devised by Infinite Love to save him: all these gospel elements are brought into view, and seen in living operation. The planets pursuing their appointed way through ethereal orbits, the lightnings playing along the skies, the changing seasons and rolling seas, all display the omniscient wisdom and boundless power of the eternal God. But in all these glorious phenomena we can see no *will* but the directing will, no *mind* but the ruling mind: all nature is obedient to her Lord. The Bible, however, not only reveals the great system of redemption; it also exhibits the light of heaven struggling with hellish darkness in the mind and heart of man; the grace of the Holy Spirit in conflict with human depravity and Satanic influence. In a word, it shows us the infinite attributes of Deity in mighty and constant collision with the energies of evil, in order to rescue man from the ruins of the fall, and make him meet for heavenly glory.

Yet men wonder that the Bible should present any difficulty, or obscurity, to oppose our clear and

our knowledge seems but like an entrance into the vestibule, while the glorious intellectual temple itself remains unexplored, or as only preliminary means to heights and depths of knowledge, of which little more is yet known than the possibility of their existence. And yet that volume of truth which, passing far beyond the laws of material being, and the intellectual efforts of the greatest men, treats of such august and weighty subjects, as the profound evil and fearful consequences of sin,—the boundless wisdom, love, and power displayed in the economy of redeeming grace,—the goings forth of the Godhead to save man from hell, and raise him to heaven,—is doubted or rejected by some persons, because it contains many things “hard to be understood!” It may be frankly acknowledged and safely maintained, that a book making such communications to men, in the present state of human nature, cannot, in regard to their apprehension of its contents, be altogether free from difficulty.

Nor are we at liberty to pass over and to neglect those portions of holy scripture which at first sight appear to be very obscure, or even inscrutable. Not only is it our duty to “know the truth” which is essential to salvation; to acquaint ourselves with those precepts and promises which are so plain, that “he may run that readeth:” it is equally our duty to search out diligently the meaning of the Spirit, in

is one of this character. The Cherubim were figures made of gold, and placed on each end of the mercy-seat, which stood in the most holy place of the tabernacle and of the temple. The term is also used by Moses in other parts of his history, and by the Psalmist and the Prophets. From the general tenor of these scriptures it has been assumed by all commentators, ancient and modern, as a great fact, that the Cherubim of the sanctuary had some important symbolical purpose and meaning. Of this no doubt can be entertained. The chief difficulty is, to ascertain the correct nature and character of the symbolism. On this point the most strange and discordant notions have been propounded. It will be unnecessary to examine all of these in detail, as in modern times but three opinions have obtained any considerable currency and support. To those, therefore, the discussion will be limited.

It has been maintained that the cherubic figures were intended to symbolize the Divine Persons in the holy Trinity.

That they referred to angelic nature and ministrations.

That they were typical or representative of the true church, the faithful believers in the great Atonement.

To some minds it may appear of little consequence which of these theories affords the true key to the symbolism of the cherubic figures, or whether any

Cherubim are found occupying a most prominent position in "the holiest of all," which sacred place and its consecrated furniture are declared by an inspired apostle to be "patterns of things in the heavens." (Heb. ix. 23.) The Cherubim are spoken of in connexion with God's dealings in judgment and mercy toward our first parents, and consequently stand identified with the religion of the early patriarchs. The Cherubim are frequently referred to by pious Hebrews as the seat of the Divine Presence, and are thus associated in a very remarkable manner with their religious joys and hopes and confidence. The Cherubim are again seen in some of the most glorious visions by which the Old-Testament prophets were instructed in the mysteries of the promised kingdom of grace, and received pledges of the certain accomplishment of the predicted incarnation. It is not, therefore, consistent with the profession of scriptural Christianity to be indifferent to the Divine purpose in the appointment of types and symbols so interwoven with the whole texture of revealed truth. It is not only allowable, but it becomes our duty, to endeavour, as far as our means permit, to apprehend the true intent and proper character of this symbolism.

If, with this object in view, attention is directed to the subject, serious discouragement will be found in the several conflicting opinions already noticed; a

The First of these theories—namely, that which supposes the Cherubim to have been appointed as symbolical of the three Persons of the holy Trinity, the figure of the lion representing the second Person, being associated with the human form, as indicating the promised incarnation—was taught by Mr. Hutchinson and his followers with great zeal, talent, and learning. Among the supporters of this and other theological and philosophical opinions advocated by this writer, we find the names of Bishop Horne, and his biographer Mr. W. Jones, Mr. Romaine, Julius Bates, Parkhurst the lexicographer, Dr. Hodges, Provost of Oriel, Dr. Wetherall, Master of University-College, Oxford, and other eminent men.

The Second opinion referred to—or that which teaches that the word “Cherubim” is a term employed to designate an elevated order of angels, and that the figures on the ark of the covenant were symbols of angelic nature and ministration—has been so generally advocated and received, that it is scarcely necessary to specify the names of any men as its propounders. Drs. Doddridge, Mant, and Patrick, and Mr. Wesley, in common with divines and commentators generally, have supported this opinion.

The Third mode of interpretation—which sup-

It may appear very presumptuous to endeavour to cast light upon a subject of such acknowledged difficulty, and respecting which men of eminent learning and talent have so greatly differed in judgment. The responsibility of resisting this weight of authority is, indeed, in some measure diminished by the fact, that but few of the persons to whose names reference has been made, as having expressed decided views upon this point, have carefully studied the whole subject. It has been regarded by one person under one aspect, by a second under another. Some have drawn their conclusions from the bearing of a text in Genesis; others, from the construction put upon the vision of Ezekiel. So that the fact of difference of sentiment, under such circumstances, is rather an argument for, than a dissuasive from, a careful examination of the whole matter. It may be further stated, without any disparagement to individuals, that the opinions to which we have just adverted, have in many cases been formed under a strong partiality for a favourite theory, or elicited by critical examination of isolated texts, without sufficient regard to the general tenor and scope of scriptural truth, or a steady recognition of its evangelical character. I feel further disposed to prosecute this inquiry under a deep conviction, that

to inform the reader, that the third, and most unpopular, of the schemes to which I have alluded, is that which a careful and extended investigation has induced me to receive as offering the only true key to the symbolism of the Cherubim. It will be my endeavour, in the following pages, to give an outline of the examination which led me to this conclusion.

In doing this, it is proposed to show, That no satisfactory reasons have been assigned for believing that the Cherubim were intended to represent the several Persons of the holy Trinity, or to symbolize angelic nature.

The first of these notions does not now extensively prevail. The sect of the Hutchinsonians having of late years greatly declined, I am not aware that many persons now profess to believe the sentiments which the learned founder of that body propounded on the subject of the Cherubim : it will not, therefore, be necessary to examine at any great length the arguments advanced in support of his opinion. One or two observations will, it is thought, be sufficient to remove any doubt on this head.

First. The great design of the Mosaic economy was to raise and maintain in the world, by Divine authority, a powerful and permanent protest against

that none of these should be drawn into action, as incentives to idolatrous practices. "Take ye good heed unto yourselves," said the inspired legislator; "for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure." (Deut. iv. 15, 16.) In addition to this caution, specific law was laid down: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above," &c. (Exod. xx. 4.) With this command under our eye, this caution ringing in our ears, is it to be believed that Moses was instructed by the same Divine authority to make golden images symbolical of the Trinity in unity, and to place them on the ark of the covenant in the most holy place? Is not such a supposition altogether opposed to the genius of the Mosaic economy? It seems impossible to avert the force of this objection. If the cherubic figures were symbols of Deity, then the harmony of the Mosaic institute is destroyed, and the practice enjoined is directly opposed to the plain letter of the law. For surely no more direct infraction of the second commandment can be conceived, than the making, and placing upon the ark, golden images representing to the human eye the mystery of the Divine Nature.

Secondly. The Divine Presence is frequently

spoken of as separate and distinct from the Cherubim. One is the inhabitant, the other the habitation. Throughout the whole of sacred scripture they are never confounded. The Shekinah is never spoken of as identical or even of similar character with the Cherubim; nor are the cherubic figures ever said to exhibit Divine attributes or powers apart from the glorious Presence revealed in the Shekinah. If, then, the Cherubim are to be regarded as symbolic emblems of the Divine existence, we have two displays of Deity in juxtaposition; and, to heighten the difficulty to the utmost, one of these is said to inhabit the other! The subject is too sacred to justify any further exhibition of the consequences of this notion, or it might be shown to involve positive absurdity.

It will not be necessary even to refer to the curious verbal criticism by which Mr. Hutchinson and his followers have laboured to sustain their views; for, even if they had in this respect succeeded to the full extent of their pretensions, no result of such efforts would be entitled to rank as an undoubted interpretation of holy scripture, if it produced certain confusion in the scriptural account of the Divine Presence in the sanctuary, and made the furniture of the holy place itself a violation of Divine law.

has obtained general currency and credit, and is still held in esteem by divines and ministers. When any idea is so enshrined in the religious views, and habits of thought and judgment, of Christian people, it becomes invested with an authority and power which is not only hard to be shaken, but which to a certain extent shelters it from investigation, by forbidding calm and unprejudiced inquiry. It is this difficulty, more than any other, which stands opposed to a satisfactory discussion of the subject. But, however prevalent this opinion may be, and with whatever tenacity it may be held, its most devoted admirers must admit that it is merely an opinion. It is taught in no portion of holy writ,—is not asserted in any text throughout the whole Bible. Dr. Thomas Sharp, one of the most learned and able opponents of the Hutchinsonian dogmas, and an equally devoted supporter of the angelic theory, candidly admits that “it cannot be expressly proved by any scripture authority.”

This fact is worthy of serious consideration. The term “Cherubim” is never so used in holy scripture that it must refer to angels. The cherubic figures are never so spoken of as to make it certain that they were designed to represent angelic nature. However extensively, then, this opinion may prevail, however estimable and learned the men who teach

commentators and critics who advocate this theory seem to rely chiefly upon two alleged reasons for believing that the cherubic figures were intended to symbolize angelic beings. These shall be given in their own words.

The First of these is thus stated by Dr. Sharp :
 “Seeing, then, that the ministry of angels at Mount Sinai must stand allowed as a scripture doctrine; and seeing the ark of the testimony was made on purpose to be the repository of this law after it was wrote, in tables of stone, *by the finger of God*, which was, probably, an act also of the ministering angels; what more obvious or easy construction can be put on the golden *Cherubim*, ordered to be placed on the cover of the said ark, at each end thereof, than that which has been most commonly received,—that they were designed to represent the angels of God, or those celestial attendants, or satellites, that encompassed his throne, and served under him, when he was visibly present at Mount Sinai; and that these emblems of them were fixed at each end of the cover of the chest where the said law was deposited, in token of their having assisted at its first promulgation, and of their being protectors and defenders of it, and remembrancers and admonitors of the testimony contained therein?”*

The Second reason assigned for believing the

mediate presence of God in heaven. It is hence inferred that the Cherubim were appointed to represent the presence of angels in the place where the Divine Glory dwelt in the sanctuary. The argument is thus stated by a late author: "It seems much more probable, that, as most eminent divines have supposed, the Cherubim represented the angels, who surround the Divine Presence in heaven. Accordingly, they had their faces turned toward the mercy-seat, where God was supposed to dwell, whose glory the angels in heaven always behold, and upon which their eyes are continually fixed; as they are always upon Christ, the true propitiatory, which mystery of redemption they desire, as Peter tells us, 'to look into;' (1 Peter i. 12;) a circumstance evidently signified by the faces of the Cherubim being turned inward, and their eyes fixed upon the mercy-seat. We may here also observe, that, allowing Peter, in this passage, to allude to the cherubic figures, which, from his mode of expression, can scarcely be doubted, this amounts to a strong presumption that the Cherubim represented not so much an order, as the angels in general, all of whom are said to 'desire to look into' the subject of human redemption, and to all whose orders, 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifested wisdom of God is made known by the

in carrying on God's designs : but in the sanctuary they are connected with the administration of grace ; and they are rather adoring beholders than actors, and probably appeared under forms more simple." *

I believe these extracts exhibit fairly, and as fully as my limits allow, the reasons alleged in favour of the prevalent opinion that the Cherubim were designed to represent holy angels.

Before proceeding to remark particularly upon these passages, it may be noticed that not only is there no pretension made to any direct scriptural authority for this opinion, but it is not even pretended to be based upon any scriptural interpretation. The difficulty is not to be met here by clearing up a doubtful reading, or by substituting a supposed emendation of the sense of scripture. No approximation to scriptural support for this opinion is found in the whole compass of revealed truth. More than this : the angelic theory, as a proposed solution of cherubic symbolism, is not affirmed to have connexion with the exhibition or evolution of any important purposes in the economy of grace. The utmost which the learned authors just quoted venture upon, is to place the case in the form of a hypothetical inference. "What more obvious or easy construction can be put on the golden Cherubim?" asks Dr. Sharp.

importance, can scarcely be regarded as settled by reasons which only justify such a mode of enunciation. In these circumstances it is not only open to investigation, but invites modest inquiry, solicits diligent research. An examination of these quotations will show, that the reasons which they exhibit are as unsatisfactory as the manner in which they are propounded.

In the paragraph quoted from Dr. Sharp, that learned author supposes that figures symbolical of holy angels were placed on the mercy-seat, which covered the ark containing the law, because "of their having assisted at its first promulgation, and of their being protectors and defenders of it, and remembrancers or admonitors of the testimony contained therein." Is this conjecture admissible? Can it be imagined that golden figures, designed to indicate angelic ministration, aid, and protection, were located in the very place where Jehovah had his seat? The presence of the God of Israel was verily displayed in the glorious Shekinah over the mercy-seat. We are required to believe, that in immediate contact with that PRESENCE golden images were placed to symbolize angelic protection and aid! To my mind the idea appears not only most unreasonable, but utterly repulsive. Is this the means taken by special Divine command to guard the people against idolatry? What could have been done more likely to lead them to offer

But if Dr. Sharp's conjecture be correct, the object for which the cherubic figures were placed in this position must have been known to the ancient Israelites. In the opinion of this divine, there was no great typical purpose to be evolved in the progress of ages, no important religious design thus symbolized which the advancing light of revelation might in after-times explain. The cherubic emblems, according to Dr. Sharp, were placed on the propitiatory because of the part which angels took in the dispensation of the law, because this vocation of theirs was a recognised doctrine, and because of their being its acknowledged protectors, defenders, and admonitors. But were angels regarded as holding this position by the ancient Hebrews? Their sacred books afford no countenance to the allegation, and present weighty evidence against it.

When, for instance, after the sin of Israel in the case of the golden calf, the Lord said unto Moses, "Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: and I will send an angel before thee;" (Exod. xxxiii. 1, 2;) did the people or their leader display any confidence in angelic defence. or any

tration was in operation, the offenders would have promptly embraced the advantages resulting from cherubic influence. On the contrary, however, Moses and the people "mourned" before the Lord; and Moses pleaded with God in the tabernacle, and said, "Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know *whom* thou wilt send with me. And he said unto Him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." And the Lord said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." (Exod. xxxiii. 4, 12, 14, 15.) This narrative not only shows that Moses and the people preferred the guidance of the Lord to that of an angel: they professed utter ignorance and distrust of angelic guidance, although the Lord had said that he would drive out the nations of Canaan before them. Moses would have chosen the wilderness with the Lord, rather than Canaan under the guidance of an angel. The faith and confidence of Israel were centred in the LORD, and they evinced no such reference to angelic aid, as to justify the opinion that the figures in the holy place symbolized celestial ministers.

Nor do the reasons assigned by the revered Richard Watson on this subject seem more free from exception. He takes for granted,—or at least

apostle is, that the faces of the Cherubim were turned inward, and their eyes fixed upon the mercy-seat. But is not this a most unsatisfactory mode of solving the difficult and important question of cherubic symbolism? We have here two facts:—golden Cherubim on the lid of the propitiatory, with their faces turned toward the place where the atoning blood was sprinkled; and the desire of angels to look into the wonders of redemption. Do these two facts so necessarily connect themselves, and adumbrate each other, as to render the supposed reference of the apostle to the Cherubim undoubted? I think not. I regard the conclusion as the most unsafe that a scripture expositor could adopt. Such a mode of reasoning can never secure confidence, whatever may be the opinion advocated. In estimating the probability of the apostle's allusion, attention should be given to the scope of the writer. If these words had occurred in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, or indeed in any part of that Epistle, the case had been different. But Peter, throughout his whole letter, makes no direct allusion whatever to the Mosaic ritual or to the sacred sanctuary. He had spoken of the ministrations of the prophets, of their predictions of gospel grace, and of the sufferings of Christ; and, having

at once of all criticism and confidence in the interpretation of scripture.

Mr. Watson supposes the Cherubim, as described in different passages of holy writ, to indicate angelic ministration under so many corresponding aspects. The Cherubim of the tabernacle he regards as symbolical of angels connected with the administration of grace, where, however, "they are rather adoring beholders than actors." "The Cherubim of Ezekiel," he says, "are evidently connected with the dispensations of Providence:" while the "living creatures" of the Apocalypse, although clearly the same as the Cherubim of Ezekiel, (as will be shown hereafter,) are regarded "as emblematical of the ministrations of angels in what pertains to those providential events which more particularly concern the church."

But while all this supposed symbolism of angelic nature and ministration is raised upon mere hypothesis, it stands opposed by serious objections.

The tabernacle, and all its furniture, were "patterns of things in the heavens,"—types of glorious realities above. Here was the throne of grace sprinkled with blood, the place where the high priest made atonement for the sins of the people, and offered intercession to God for them. Here, in the Mosaic sanctuary, was a copy, in visible and tangible

of redemption has here its corresponding figure, the great object of all this merciful arrangement does not appear. The Glory of the Lord shines forth from between the Cherubim; the Divine law is placed in the ark, which itself represents the covenant of mercy; there is the propitiatory, the sacrifice, the blood of atonement, its application and reception; the golden censer and its use, showing forth the prevalence of prayer; even angelic spectators are supposed to be introduced. Yet, according to this scheme, man does not appear. Man, the most interested object in the whole plan of mercy, has no emblem; human nature, which it is the great design of all this apparatus of mercy to save, and which by its operation is saved, renewed, and glorified, has no place!

But, again, this most holy place, as typical of the heavenly world, was intended to exhibit not only the process of the economy of grace, but its object and end. It represented the glorious presence of God upon his throne, and the efficacy of atonement, as prefiguring the entrance of Christ as our High Priest into heaven, where he was to prepare a place for his people. It was, therefore, pre-eminently typical of the home of the faithful; of the object of their hope, their final rest. But notwithstanding all this, if the Cherubim symbolized angel

unexplained, must be regarded as a strong objection to any theory which creates it.

There is another objection to the angelic scheme of cherubic interpretation, which will have weight with every attentive student of holy scripture. The doctrine of angelic ministration is frequently spoken of in the Old and New Testaments ; it is given in promises, stated as fact ; instances are recorded of its operation, and angels are spoken of as identified with this vocation ; and yet in no instance do we find angelic ministration associated with the Cherubim. There is never the slightest connexion implied between them. If it be true, that the Cherubim were intended to symbolize angels, and their interposition in human affairs ; and if constant reference is made to these celestial beings in this character, and we also find frequent mention made of the Cherubim from the Book of Genesis to that of the Revelation ; is it not a most remarkable fact, that these allusions never coalesce ; that we never find an instance in which angelic ministration is distinctly spoken of with any certain notice of the Cherubim ; and that when these symbolic figures are referred to, we never have an undoubted allusion to angels ? If the Cherubim were indeed intended to symbolize angelic ministration, it seems wonderful that throughout the scriptures, in narrative and history, in the songs of the Psalmist and the poetry of the

Again: it has already been urged as the most serious objection to the Hutchinsonian theory, that it makes the Cherubim of the sanctuary an infraction of the second commandment of the Decalogue; but it cannot escape observation, that if the Cherubim were designed to represent angels, or angelic ministration, their construction and appointment on the mercy-seat would still be opposed to the Divine law: "Thou shalt not make to thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven." (Exod. xx. 4.) To this objection it is answered, that it proves too much, as it was equally a violation of the command to make pomegranates, palm-trees, oxen, &c. "But pomegranates were the principal ornaments of the superb columns in Solomon's temple; palm-trees were carved upon the walls and doors; lions were figured on the base of the smaller lavers, and the large one rested upon twelve brazen oxen." The objection is thus charged with sophistry, and with concealing the moral quality and end of the commandment, which, it is alleged, "does not proscribe carved work and embroidery, but *idolatry*: 'Thou shalt not BOW DOWN THYSELF TO THEM, NOR SERVE THEM.'" (Verse 5.) This point merits inquiry, and especially as it is found in a highly respectable religious periodical, which has contributed in no ordinary measure to diffuse sound views of biblical and religious truth.

earth, as the archetype or pattern of an *image to be erected as an idol or object of worship.*" I must take exception to this version of the law. Without presuming to decide how far the Hebrews, in the early ages of their history, entertained the same sentiments as their successors did, it must not be forgotten that Origen understood this law to prohibit not only the worshipping, but the making, of images; and as such, he assures us, it was enforced; for "there was not permitted to be so much as a picture-drawer or a maker of statues in the commonwealth." But, however this may be, no reasonable doubt can be entertained, that "the end of the commandment" had reference, not only to actual idolatry, but to every incentive to it, every provision for it, and to all things having a tendency to lead the people into this great evil. This is proved by the fact, that groves which had been the scene of idolatrous practices were commanded to be cut down; (Exod. xxxiv. 13—15;) and the gold and silver of which images had been made, or with which they had been adorned, were not to be taken or possessed by any Israelite. (Deut. vii. 25, 26.) These explicit statutes explain the second law of the Decalogue; and prove that the quality and end of the commandment was to keep the people, not simply from the act of idolatrous worship, but at the utmost possible distance from it, and all its

of Solomon's temple. To this it may be replied, that the sacred record does not say that these sculptures were made by the special command of God, as were the Cherubim. Josephus and other Jews speak of them as the beginning of Solomon's defec- tion from God.*

But, not to rely on this point, I seriously object to the comparison. The end of the law was to guard the people against the sin of idolatry. Re- garded under this aspect, what comparison can be instituted between the palm-tree ornaments of So- lomon's columns, and the cherubic figures? It would be as reasonable to meet an objection to placing a crucifix, or an image of the Virgin, on the altar, on the ground of its tendency to promote idolatry, by saying that Corinthian capitals, carved animal figures and honeysuckles, were used as archi- tectural decorations of the building. If the Cherubim were recognised as representatives of angelic beings, and, as such, placed on the mercy-seat in immediate contact with the Divine Presence, where the blood of sacrifice was sprinkled, and the great atonement for sin offered; and, especially, if they occupied this sacred and prominent position, because they were regarded as protectors and admonitors of the law; their position there would, in my judgment, be as likely to lead the Hebrews to look upon them

With respect to the sculptured oxen and lions, I regard it as open to grave doubt whether these were any thing more than cherubic figures, or particular parts of such figures, exhibited under different aspects.*

In these circumstances, although strongly disposed to treat long-standing and generally-received opinions with suitable respect, and to listen to the judgment of learned authors with unfeigned deference, I cannot receive the doctrine of the angelic character of cherubic symbolism. It is sustained by no scripture authority, countenanced by no reference to the grand purpose of redemption, and is opposed by many and weighty objections. Instead, therefore, of determining the great and important question of the Cherubim, it not only justifies a further investigation of the subject, but demands renewed efforts to elicit, if possible, a more satisfactory solution of the difficulty.

As the most probable means of succeeding in this object, I propose to examine every passage in holy scripture in which the words "Cherub," "Cherubim," or any cognate terms, are found; and, as far as possible, to ascertain the sense of the passage, and the import of the terms.

The first text which this inquiry brings under our notice is, Gen. iii. 24, which is thus rendered

in the authorized version: "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." These words have been generally understood to mean, that, on the expulsion of the guilty pair from the garden, God placed an angel-guard, bearing a sword like flaming fire, to prevent them from returning to Paradise, and thus regaining access to the tree of life. It is therefore referred to by those who maintain the angelic theory of the cherubic figures, as "a clear and authentic text" which authoritatively proves the application of Cherubim to angels. This is, however, begging the question at issue. There is no mention of angels in the text, except it is found under the term "Cherubim," the import of which remains to be ascertained. It will, consequently, be necessary to refer particularly to the more important words in this passage.

The word יָשַׁקַן (*yashkan*) which our version renders "placed," signifies "to dwell in a tabernacle, to inhabit." It is the word from which was derived *Shekinah*, the term employed to designate the glorious visible presence of the Lord in the Hebrew tabernacle. Although found in several connexions where the sense of secular habitation is obvious,

and will be their God." Num. v. 3: "That they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I" שכנתי " *dwell.*" Psalm lxxviii. 16: "This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will" ישכן " *dwell in it for ever.*" Psalm lxxiv. 2: "Remember this Mount Zion, wherein thou hast *dwelt*" שכנת. It is more especially employed when the Lord is said "to cause his name to *dwell,*" implying the stated visible manifestation of his presence. Ezra vi. 12: "And the God that hath caused his name to *dwell* there," שכן שמה—literally, "hath shekinized his name." Compare Deut. xii. 11; xiv. 23; xvi. 2, 6, 11; xxvi. 2; and Neh. i. 9. It is used emphatically in speaking of the cloud of the Divine Glory dwelling upon Mount Sinai. Exod. xxiv. 16: "And the glory of the Lord *abode*" ישכן "upon Mount Sinai." The term *Shekinah* שכין is defined by Buxtorf (*Lex. Tal.* voc. שכן) as meaning, primarily, "habitation," or "inhabitation;" but as having a dominant reference to the Divine Glory in its outward and visible manifestation.* It will not, therefore, be thought unreasonable to request the reader to allow a meaning to the word in this text beyond that which is conveyed by the English verb "placed."

The next word requiring observation in this text, כרובים (*kerubim*), rendered in our version " *Cheru-*

meaning of this word has been sometimes studied, not so much in order to ascertain *the* sense of the term, as to discover a sense which it will bear for the purpose of sustaining a favourite scheme of interpretation. Accordingly, Parkhurst, Bate, and other Hutchinsonians, insist that the word "is compounded of כ (ke), a particle of likeness or similitude," and רוב (rub), which is "one of the highest epithets known in that language; and signifies *great* in power, wisdom, and glory, or whatever can be termed perfection." The compounded word is thus made to "signify an emblem or representation of the majesty;"* and the Cherubim are thence inferred to be emblems of Deity. Dr. Lee, who is so far inclined to this view of cherubic symbolism as to say that these figures were "apparently intended to represent the Deity," nevertheless observes, "It would be idle to offer any thing on the etymology; nothing satisfactory having yet been discovered." Mr. W. L. Roy, in his new Hebrew and English Dictionary, says "כרובים *ke-roo-vim* is improperly placed under this root (כרב). ריב or רוב is undoubtedly the root; for ר is a radical letter, and כ a prefix. 1. Then ריב means, *To earnestly contend*, as for the faith; 2. *To intercede, supplicate*, as for sinners; 3. *To defend*, as truth; 4. *To become great, head, or chief*, as a prince or ruler; 5. *To be an archer*, one who draws the bow at a venture, or

there are certain admitted facts respecting this term which, if calmly considered, may aid us in forming a judgment on this perplexing subject. It is an indisputable truth that the word never occurs as a verb in the Hebrew language, nor is ever applied to any thing from which we can collect its ideal meaning as an *uncompounded* term. This circumstance seems to bear strongly in favour of the opinion of Parkhurst and Roy, that the כ must be regarded as a prefix: an opinion which would probably never have been disputed, but for the consequence drawn from it by the Hutchinsonians. It is another admitted fact, that this prefix, when joined to a noun, expresses similitude or comparison.

If, therefore, no more can be ascertained from etymological inquiry, it may be fairly considered, that the word found in the text was not used to designate an order of angels, nor indeed in reference to angelic nature, as it seems extremely improbable that a term selected to express such a designation would imply likeness or similitude: while, on the other hand, there is strong reason for concluding that this word strictly and properly applies to the cherubic figures which stood on the ark in the Mosaic tabernacle. These are universally admitted to have had a symbolic meaning and design. The application of a compounded word expressive of

precisely what might be expected to be made to figures of an unquestioned symbolic character. The term, therefore, is one which has no appropriate application to angels, but is exactly adapted to designate the cherubic figures of the sanctuary. This conclusion appears to be rendered indisputable by the fact, that in the Hebrew the term has the definite article before it,*—“*the* Cherubim.” This language could not be applied in speaking of two, or more, selected from a host of angels: it must have referred to some specific objects with which the persons for whom Moses more immediately wrote were well acquainted.

The words לֶהַט הַחֶרֶב are rendered, in the English Bible, “a flaming sword.” As to the first term, it admits of no question: it means “fire, flame, ignited vapour.” חֶרֶב “rendered a sword, is applied to any *destroying* matter, to any thing scorched or dried up; does not signify a sword, as an arbitrary, unexpressive word; not as describing its shape, materials, or any other idea belonging to a sword; but as it is a destroying instrument. ‘*Gladius,*’ says Leigh, ‘*a cæde, vel a vastando,—vel ab exiccando.*’ It signifies destruction; and a sword is said to devour, 2 Sam.

* As the omission of the article in our version has, perhaps, more than any thing else, tended to obscure the sense of the text, it may be desirable to note the probable cause. “One great source of all these mis-translations seems to be the

ii. 26.' And in this all the Lexicons agree, and usage justifies them."* Mr. Morison, in accordance with these views, renders the phrase, "the fire of wrath."

הַמִּתְהַפֵּךְ is rendered in our version, "which turned every way," in conformity to the Septuagint and the Vulgate. If this clause is understood as applying to the "sword," it is full of difficulty. Is it intended to teach that the sword turned itself? If turned by the Cherubim, are two Cherubs employed to turn one sword? For "Cherubim" is a plural word, and "sword" a singular noun. If these objections are obviated, what is there remarkable in the turning of a sword? But this word, which cannot with propriety be applied to a sword, is very expressive of the motion of fire, which continually rolls in waves back upon itself; especially when confined as in a cloud or furnace; and answers exactly to *מחלקחה* Ezek. i. 4, "infolding, catching itself," *sese reciprocans*; the word used to describe the motion of that fire which appeared in connexion with the Cherubim to the prophet on the banks of the Chebar.

Lastly, לִשְׂמֹר rendered "keep," does not signify "to guard," but to "keep" in the sense of "observe," or "preserve." It is the same word, in precisely the same form, which, in Gen. ii. 15, is thus used. "And the Lord God took the

the term cannot be intended to describe Adam as a warrior-guard, appointed to defend the approaches to the garden; but rather to express that he was to cultivate and *preserve* the garden in its pristine beauty. The same word is also found, Deut. v. 12: "*Keep* the sabbath day." Deut. xvii. 19: "*To keep* all the words of this law." Here it is undoubtedly to be understood as enjoining *devout observance*.

I have given particular attention to this text, in the hope of rescuing it from the vulgar notion, that it speaks of God as placing angels with flaming swords to prevent man from returning to Paradise. Mr. Morison has given this version of the passage: "So he drove out the man. And he inhabited (or dwelt between) THE Cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and the fire of wrath (or fierce fire) infolding itself to preserve inviolate the way of the tree of life."* If this version exhibits the sense of the original, the passage says nothing whatever of angels, but speaks of a memorial set up before Eden to keep, or preserve inviolate, the way of the tree of life. That memorial is called "the Cherubim." It is associated with a visible flame, indicative of fierce wrath; and is invested with, or inhabited by, the PRESENCE of the LORD.

The second time we meet with the word "Cherubim" in the sacred text it occurs in the command

in the two ends of the mercy-seat. And make one Cherub on the one end, and the other Cherub on the other end : even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the Cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the Cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another ; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the Cherubims be." (Exod. xxv. 18—20.) It will be observed here, that although this is the first time the Cherubim are mentioned in connexion with the sanctuary, and Moses is now commanded to make these figures, he receives no direction as to their form or shape. Nor is this supplied afterward. The Cherubim are again referred to in chap. xxvi. 1, 31 ; xxxvi. 8, 35 : but these passages apply only to the embroidery of cherubic figures upon the curtains and veil of the tabernacle ; they give no information whatever respecting their form. Again, in chap. xxxvii. 7—9, Moses speaks of the completion of this work, and the setting up of the Cherubim on the mercy-seat ; but this account is a mere echo of the command ; it does not enlarge our knowledge concerning the shape of the Cherubim.

Considering the important position of the Cherubim, and their relation to the seat and centre of Hebrew worship, it is remarkable that the whole of the Mosaic account contains no allusion whatever to the form of the Cherubim. The obvious inference

the paradisiacal Cherubim were angels, and that cherubic figures as emblems of angelic nature were now for the first time made, and placed in the Mosaic sanctuary, labour to avert this conclusion by referring to the statement, that Moses was commanded to make the tabernacle and all its furniture after a pattern divinely revealed to him in the Mount. (Exod. xxv. 40.) But this does not meet the case: for this pattern included "the tabernacle," and "all the instruments thereof;" (verse 9;) yet the form, size, and manner of construction of many of these things are minutely described, while not a word delineative of the form of the Cherubim is given. The command itself cannot be carefully read without fixing attention on this point. The situation which the cherubic figures were to occupy is minutely detailed; their position is accurately described; the language labours to convey a clear and complete idea of every thing pertaining to the locality and arrangement of the figures; while not a word is said, the most perfect silence is observed, respecting their form. For this marked exception to the general rule there must have been some reason; and I know of none that will meet all the requirements of the case, except that which has been referred to, namely, that the Cherubim, as an element of patriarchal religion, were well known to Moses and the Israelites; that it was therefore unnecessary to describe their form: but that, as the

with great precision the position which the cherubic figures should occupy, and the manner in which they were to be arranged.

Although the Mosaic account of the cherubic figures does not furnish data sufficient to solve the question of their symbolism, it suggests some hints worthy of serious attention. The Cherubim stood on the ark of the covenant. They were made out of the same piece of solid gold which formed the propitiatory. Their wings were spread over the ark, so as to touch each other; and thus, as the Shekinah of God shone above, their heads were irradiated with its glory, while their wings overshadowed the mercy-seat. These facts are suggestive of important principles for the guidance of all inquiries into the scriptural character of cherubic symbolism. The Cherubim arose out of the propitiatory, were of the same substance with it, and derived their being from the seat of an applied atonement. From the foundation which interposed between them and the law, they rose up into the bright shining of the Divine Presence. In an ecclesiastical apparatus so full of ulterior design as the Mosaic, where every article was a type, and every arrangement had reference to some spiritual truth, all this must have had meaning; and whether the most holy place be regarded as designed to prefigure the way of access unto God through the blood of atonement, or adapted to typify the operations of grace carried on

resist the induction, that the Cherubim were intended to set forth in a most significant manner the efficiency of the great Atonement, and to foreshadow the safety, peace, and glory which its recipients were destined to enjoy.

After the consecration of the tabernacle, we are informed of the first verbal communication made to Moses from the Divine Presence, which had taken its destined position between the Cherubim. It is thus recorded: "And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two Cherubims: and he spake unto him." (Num. vii. 89.) This was a literal fulfilment of the promise previously given: "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two Cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." (Exod. xxv. 22.) The service of the tabernacle having been thus established, and the promise of God verified by his having placed himself in immediate communication with Moses, speaking to him from the seat of his Divine Presence between the Cherubim; we hear no more of these symbolic figures until the days of Samuel. Then, when the tribes of

in placing the transaction upon record, alludes to the continued residence of the Divine glory between the Cherubim : as if it were important to show, that throughout this long period, darkened as it had been by apostasy and punishment, the tabernacle still retained its peculiar glory, the dwelling of the Shekinah above the mercy-seat. When the sacred writer spoke of the removal of the ark, he said, "So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, *which dwelleth between the Cherubims.*" (1 Sam. iv. 4.)

Similar language occurs in a subsequent chapter of the scripture history. After the ark had been returned from the land of the Philistines to Bethshemesh, and had remained a long time in "the house of Abinadab in the hill," (1 Sam. vii. 1, 2,) David proposed to remove it to the new tabernacle which he had prepared for it. On this occasion expressions precisely the same as those just quoted are used by the sacred historian. Then, we are told, "David arose, and went with all the people that were with him, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts, that dwelleth between the Cherubims." (2 Sam. vi. 2.)

Again, a reference to the Cherubim is found in that splendid ode written by David to celebrate the

of his earnest and prevalent prayer, and of the mercy of God, who comes down in majesty to deliver him. Extolling this Divine interposition, he says, "He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a Cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind." (2 Sam. xxii. 10, 11.)

Here, as in other texts where the word "Cherub," or "Cherubim," occurs, it has been presumed that there is a distinct reference to angels. A brief examination of the passage will correct this error. The royal poet was lauding the goodness and power of God by which he had obtained such glorious success. In describing his prayer and its effect, he says, "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears." (2 Sam. xxii. 7.) This language clearly shows that while the sacred poet was composing this fervid verse, his thoughts of God were directed to the dwelling-place of his sacred Presence in the sanctuary; and the following verses, in order to be understood, must be read with attention to this reference. Thus the Psalmist, describing the effect of his prayer, speaks of God as moved by the supplication of his servant. He comes forth; the earth

the God of hosts descends, in the sublime imagery of the poet, riding on the wings of the Cherub.

The accuracy of this exposition is established by a reference to one word used by the Psalmist in his description : “ He rode upon a Cherub, and did *fly*.” Here the Hebrew word (כַּיִן) rendered “ fly ” signifies “ to vibrate, to move with a vibratory or tremulous motion, to flutter ; ” * and very aptly describes the shining forth of the Shekinah from between the wings of the Cherubim. The following words are in perfect agreement with this interpretation : “ He rode upon a Cherub, and did fly ; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.” Here the term rendered “ fly ” is quite a different word (קָאָרַץ) ; and in every other passage in which it is found in the scriptures, it is used to signify the swiftness of an eagle, and to express “ the rapidity with which it rushes on its prey.” † The passage therefore beautifully exhibits the Divine interposition for David’s succour. Moved by his prayer, God came forth from his sacred resting-place on the wings of a Cherub, and displayed his glorious brightness : but as if this movement was one of slow and solemn grandeur, we are immediately told, “ He did fly upon the wings of the wind.” If, as is sometimes surmised, the first motion described by the poet was intended to represent God borne on in an angelic chariot, the latter

above, the whole of this beautiful passage is harmonized with itself,—and also with the great elements of Hebrew faith.

♂ We have next to consider the references to the Cherubim which are found in the description of Solomon's temple. It is a remarkable circumstance in the completion of this great work, that while in every other instance the sacred furniture of the Mosaic tabernacle was superseded by other more costly and gorgeous articles, the ark of the covenant with its Cherubim, which had been made under the direction of Moses in the wilderness, was retained, and without addition or alteration transferred to the sacred oracle of the temple. But as the most holy place in the new edifice was much larger than the corresponding portion of the tabernacle, Solomon made two colossal Cherubim, which were placed one on each side of the ark, with expanded wings; so that two wings touched each other over the ark, while the other two wings reached the opposite walls. The sacred writer thus describes this work: "And within the oracle he" (Solomon) "made two Cherubims of olive-tree, each ten cubits high. And he set the Cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the Cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one

After the temple had been finished, the ark of the covenant was brought from the tabernacle of David on Mount Zion, and placed in its permanent resting-place in the holy oracle.

There is not, however, in this pious work of the Hebrew king, any thing which casts light upon the doctrine of cherubic symbolism. He only elaborated a plan similar, in its general design, to that which Moses had received at Sinai, and exhibited it in the temple. The sacred places and articles of the tabernacle were re-produced in the temple, not only with solidity and durability, but with vastly more magnificence and splendour. The manner in which this information is conveyed is equally devoid of instruction as to the principal matter of this inquiry : it affords no information respecting the object and end of the cherubic figures.

It will now be necessary just to notice some peculiar language found in the scriptures, which may be regarded as expressions of pious feeling, and holy confidence in God. (Psalm lxxx. 1 ; xcix. 1 ; Isai. xxxvii. 16.) In these texts, the reference to the Cherubim seems to exhibit the highest element of Hebrew faith. It recognises God in a special manner as the covenant-God of Israel ; and relies upon him as such, because of his revealed glory and manifested mercy : so that the expression, "Thou that dwellest between the Cherubims,"

presenting some important information on the subject of this inquiry. In the first chapter of his prophecy, this inspired seer informs us that, when by the river Chebar, he saw visions of God, which he describes at length. A whirlwind came out of the north, which presented to the eye of the prophet a mass of flame bursting forth, and then returning, thus "infolding itself" in the mass. Out of the midst of this igneous cloud came four living creatures, which, although they had the general appearance of humanity, had each four faces and four wings. The faces of the living creatures were those of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. Their wings were stretched upward; two wings of each being joined to those of the others, thus forming a sort of canopy level with their own heads or shoulders: with the other two wings, each covered his body. These living creatures appeared to be also connected with mysterious wheels, which, like them, seemed instinct with life, and moved as they moved. Stretched over the heads and wings of these living creatures, was a firmament of crystal, and on this stood "the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it;" (Ezek. i. 26;) while over and around the throne was a glorious rainbow. Thus was the glory of the Lord revealed

ant elements of the vision. But this manifestation of glory was neither granted to the prophet, nor recorded on the pages of scripture, merely to afford a splendid exhibition of God's majesty ; but rather with the design of revealing the purposes of the Divine will, and as preparatory to more extensive and glorious revelations.

Having been thus called to the prophetic office, and specially directed as to the discharge of its important functions, he entered upon the work, and devoted himself to the performance of its duties. Whilst thus engaged, the elders of Israel sitting before him in his house, listening to his words, precisely fourteen months after he had seen the vision which has been described, he saw another wonderful appearance, which "put forth the form of an hand, took" him "by a lock of" his "head, and brought" him "in the visions of God to Jerusalem." (Ezek. viii. 3.) Here he was placed in the court of the temple, where he saw again the same glorious revelation of the Divine Majesty, with the living creatures and living wheels, the firmament and the throne, which he had seen on the banks of the river Chebar. His celestial guide showed him, in rapid succession, the idolatrous abominations with which the priests and the princes had polluted even the temple of the Lord ; and distinctly announced the pouring out of his fury upon his elected, but apostate, people. Immediately a

inkhorn at his side. They having taken their place beside the brasen altar, the Glory of God, the resident Shekinah, left its seat between the Cherubims, and came to the threshold of the temple.* The voice of this Glory commanded the messenger with the inkhorn to "go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." (Ezek. ix. 4.) And to the others the voice said, in the hearing of the prophet, "Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary." (Verses 5, 6.) As the slaughter progressed, the prophet fell on his face, and made supplication for Israel: but the Lord said, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not." (Verse 9.)

The attention of the prophet was now directed to the throne which rested on the firmament above the living creatures; and he that sat thereon

burning coals, which sparkled and ran down from between them, and to scatter these fiery elements over the city. He executed this command, one of the living creatures having given him the coals of fire. At this time the Glory of the Lord arose from the threshold of the temple, and rested above the living Cherubim. The living creatures are now called "Cherubims:" for the prophet, who, as a priest, must have been well acquainted with the cherubic figure, now says of them, "I knew that they were THE *Cherubims*." (Ezek. x. 20.) The Shekinah having thus left the temple, and taken its seat on the throne above the living Cherubim, the command was given for the living wheels to "roll on;"* (verse 13;) upon which the Cherubim lifted up their wings, and the august vision moved onward, and then stayed awhile over the east gate of the temple. (Verse 19.) At length they passed from thence, and made a transient pause over the city; whence they proceeded to the Mount of Olives, on the east of the city; after which the prophet saw it no more. (xi. 22, 23.)

It does not lie within my province to attempt an exposition of this sublime and intricate portion of holy scripture, any farther than it is necessary to gather up and apply the additional information

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 * So I interpret הגלגל (*haggalgal*), which is rendered

which it affords respecting the Cherubim. It is, however, essential for this purpose, that we form a distinct idea of the leading object and general scope of the vision. I fully concur in the opinion of a sensible author quoted by Dr. A. Clarke, first, that “an explanation which accounts for all the parts contained in the vision, is much more probable than those which explain only one part;” and, secondly, that “an explanation which is conformable to the present circumstances of the prophet, and of the people to whom he is sent, as well as to the nature of the things he is called upon to say to them, is incomparably more probable than those explanations which go in quest of past or future events, which have no connexion with the immediate circumstances of the prophet, nor with the end of his mission.” But while I fully admit these rules to be incontestable, I cannot agree with the writer, “that God here draws a plan of the government of his providence.” On the contrary, I regard this conclusion as quite at variance with the general rules which he had previously so ably advanced. Did the doctrine of a general or particular providence, or the laws by which it was regulated, or the manner of its administration, form the subject-matter of the prophet’s communication to the people? Is it possible that

The result of careful inquiry has convinced me, that whatever providential operations stood connected with the grand crisis in which Ezekiel was called to minister, they were all secondary to great religious interests, purposes, and dangers. Did not the mission of the prophet go far beyond the temporal condition of the Jews of his day? Did not the circumstances of the Hebrew people, and the nature of the things which the prophet had to communicate, demand, especially at that juncture, important developments of the high purposes of grace? Let it be observed that the elect people of the Lord were now destined to fall into the hands of their enemies, the throne of David to be trampled in the dust, the glorious temple, where God had long visibly dwelt, to be burned with fire, and that the whole land, which God had so specially given to his elected people, and which he had so long defended by miraculous interposition, was now to be trodden down by the Gentiles. Who can contemplate these impending judgments without feeling, that great and important questions of the highest religious interest would arise out of these circumstances? How could the favoured people of God be so fearfully punished, without destroying the faith and hope of the pious remnant, and annihilating all trust in the Lord as a covenant-keeping God? How was the visible church

means were the hopes of the pious to be maintained as to the certain appearing of the promised Messiah, when all the machinery which ages had raised, apparently for this express purpose, was by this whirlwind of judgment suddenly swept away? It appears impossible to review the real state of the Hebrew nation, as the depositary of revealed truth, and as the visible church of God, without perceiving that these were the weighty problems to be solved at that crisis, and with which the mission of the prophet had mainly to do.

Did the visions presented to the view of Ezekiel meet the case, when regarded in this aspect? This forms a fair test of the soundness of the views here advanced.

By unveiling the hidden idolatry of the princes and priests, the prophet was shown, and through him the captives in Chaldea were informed, that not only Jerusalem, but the temple, was profaned by the vilest apostasy. By this means, the ruin of the Hebrew state and nation was declared to arise, not out of the ordinary influences of politics or war, nor out of the usual operations of providence; but as a special and immediate penal infliction for national sin. This vision proclaimed the important truth, that those who were preserved from personal destruction, were saved, not by accident, but through the special interposition and appointment of Heaven, as being less guilty than their idolatrous neighbours

the temple was the seat of the Divine Presence,—by showing that God had abandoned his former residence. The union of the Shekinah with living Cherubim *moving* under the immediate guidance of God, the appearance of a man upon the throne, and the rainbow about the throne, all attested the fidelity of Jehovah to his covenant, indicated the certain accomplishment of his purposes of mercy, and even cast additional light upon the approaching Incarnation and the promised kingdom of grace.

I know not whether these brief observations will be regarded as at all elucidating the scope and intent of this sublime vision; nor will my limits allow a further investigation of the subject: but I feel deeply assured that the design of these revelations was to illustrate the great purposes of redemption, with special reference to the state of the visible church at that time.

It only remains, with regard to this portion of scripture, to collect and arrange the additional information which it affords on the subject of the Cherubim.

1. We have here, for the first time, a complete and particular description of their form. It is difficult to conceive that Ezekiel, who was a priest, should have been ignorant of the cherubic figure; equally difficult to entertain a doubt as to the

tion of animal parts gave a compounded appearance to the figure of the Cherubim, the human form was predominant. Besides the face of a man, which each Cherub had in common with that of an ox, a lion, and an eagle, the prophet is careful to tell us, that, as to their general appearance, "they had the likeness of a man." This circumstance is worthy attentive consideration.

3. In this case the Cherubim are associated with the throne of God. The cherubic figures of the sanctuary stood on the propitiatory, and the visible Presence shone forth from above them. But this is the first time that the seat of the Divine Presence is termed כִּסֵּה (*kis-seh*), "a throne:" and, what is still more remarkable, upon this "throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it." (Ezek. i. 26.) Another equally striking circumstance is "the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain," which was round about the throne. (Verse 28.) This is the second time that the rainbow is mentioned in holy scripture; and as in both cases it is introduced as a sign, symbol, or pledge, the object and meaning of which were clearly explained on the first occasion, there can be little danger of our mistaking its import here. When God set his bow in the cloud at the first, he said unto Noah, "I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood" (Gen. ix. 11). And in the

here, we can scarcely err if we take it in its declared religious character, as a token of the covenant, a pledge that God's revealed truth and declared purposes shall certainly be accomplished, despite of all unpromising appearances and conflicting agencies. Nor, when we see the Shekinah from the mercy-seat placed upon the throne with the likeness of a man upon it, can there exist a reasonable doubt that the covenant and the truth, of which this bow is the token and the pledge, is that which pertains to the redeeming purpose of God toward ruined man.

4. In this vision there is seen a burning fire between the Cherubim, apart from the glory which was above upon the throne. It does not appear that there was any thing equivalent to this in connexion with the Cherubim of the sanctuary, except we may suppose the fire of the Divine anger to exist, which was quenched by the blood of atonement. For this seems to be the import of the flames in the vision ; especially as the fire taken from thence was scattered over the city, evidently as a sentence of, and prelude to, its destruction. But although, so far as we know, the sanctuary afforded nothing, in direct appearance, analogous to this fire, there is, as I have shown, a precisely similar allusion in the version which I have quoted respecting the paradisiacal Cherubim; and it is a curious fact, which cannot

God. Thou art the anointed Cherub that covereth ; and I have set thee so : thou wast upon the holy mountain of God ; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God : and I will destroy thee, O covering Cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.” (Ezek. xxviii. 13, 14, 16.) From these allusions we are warranted to conclude, not only that, in the estimation of Ezekiel, the Cherubim of which he spoke were common alike to his vision, to the sanctuary, and to Paradise ; but also that the fire spoken of in respect of the paradisiacal Cherubim, was not a sword-like flame, but *infolding fire*, in which the Cherubim appeared to stand.

5. In the vision of the prophet there is an exhibition of living Cherubim. Except in the poetic imagery of one passage in the Psalms, which has been referred to, nothing decisive of this character is previously found in scripture. I am well aware that the text so frequently referred to in Genesis has been generally understood in this sense ; but it contains nothing inconsistent with the opinion, that it speaks of cherubic figures similar in appearance to those afterward placed in the sanctuary. The description of Ezekiel, however, exhibits living Cherubim, animated by “the Spirit,” (Ezek. i. 12,) and obedient to his will. This is a most important fact in the

terms "Cherub," or "Cherubim," do not occur, there is an evident allusion to the same or similar emblems under cognate names.

The first case of this kind which presents itself to our attention is that of Isaiah's vision of the glory of the Lord, and the Seraphim. (vi. 1—4.) Commentators generally are agreed as to the principal circumstances of this glorious revelation. It is currently believed, that during this vision the prophet stood in the court of the temple, by the altar of burnt-offering; that the veil separating the most holy from the holy place was taken away, and the inner sanctuary thus made visible. Here God is seen seated on his throne above the ark, where the glory appeared between the Cherubim: this is called by the Lord himself "the place of his throne." (Ezek. xliii. 7.) The alteration which the vision supposes in the arrangements of the temple, was probably the elevation of the mercy-seat, here called the "throne;" and the animation of the Cherubim, which are spoken of as living beings. For, that the Seraphim of this vision are the same as the Cherubim of the temple in an animated form, can scarcely be doubted; especially when it is considered, that they are described as being on, or above, the throne.* None but symbolical creatures would be placed in such immediate juxta-position with the Divine Presence; and if this peculiarity of situation be held insufficient to establish an identity between

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seat, the deficiency may be abundantly supplied by comparing Isaiah's vision with that of Ezekiel. It is scarcely possible to read both accounts without perceiving their close resemblance.

It may, indeed, be urged that there is a difference in the names given to these symbolical figures by these two inspired authors. Ezekiel calls his living creatures, "Cherubim," while Isaiah denominates those which he saw as "Seraphim." But, on examination, this diversity, instead of forming an objection, strengthens the argument. The common interpretation, that the latter term, signifying "burning" is used to designate angels of a particular order remarkable for the intensity of their love, has no warrant whatever either in scripture history or in verbal criticism. The term is never used in holy scripture in a figurative or poetic sense, to signify intense affection, or any analogous idea. The Lexicons assign three meanings to the word, or three different senses in which it is used :

1. "To burn, burn up; to be burnt," &c.

2. A species of "serpent:" the term is used to designate the particular kind of serpents sent to plague the Israelites in the wilderness. "The *fiery* serpents" is literally "the *Seraph* serpents." (Num. xxi. 6.) The command to Moses, "Make thee a

at a loss to know : but abundant reason is found for their application to the Cherubim. Speaking of these living creatures, Ezekiel says, that as the Cherubim appeared in the infolding fire, "they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass;" (Ezek. i. 7;) that "their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning." (Verses 13, 14.) Nor was this a casual or accidental appearance of the Cherubim; but, as I have shown by Ezekiel's allusion to the Cherub of Eden, "walking up and down in the midst of the fire," it appears to be a distinguishing feature in cherubic representation. When Isaiah, therefore, saw these living symbols in his vision, what could be more suitable or appropriate than that he should call them *Seraphim*, or "burning ones?"

The vision of Isaiah must, therefore, be added to those portions of holy writ which speak of the character of cherubic symbolism. Notwithstanding all that Parkhurst and other Hutchinsonians have ingeniously surmised, it indubitably demonstrates that the Cherubim could not be designed to symbolize Divine Persons, since the Deity would not be exhibited praising himself. Nor can they be understood to represent angels: who might be around, or be-

Majesty, cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips;" (Isai. vi. 5;) one of the Seraphim immediately flew towards him, and, taking a live coal from the altar, applied it to his mouth, saying, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." (Verse 7.) This symbolical action casts great light upon the subject. The word of God declares angels to be "ministering spirits," (Heb. i. 14,) and contains abundant instances of their ministration in respect of nations, individuals, and the church of God. Mighty works are attributed to their agency, and wonderful deeds are ascribed to their power. But in no case do we find angels employed in the ministration of grace. Man is the chosen instrument for this purpose. The instance under consideration, therefore, further tends to confirm the impression that the Cherubim were intended to symbolize the church, since they are seen performing acts essentially connected with the vocation of the church.

It will also be necessary to notice, in connexion with this subject, that class of scripture texts which speak of חרפים *Teraphim*. The first time this word occurs in the Bible is in Gen. xxxi. 19,

God, and was, as there is every reason for believing, a worshipper of Jehovah. The Teraphim are in this instance always spoken of in the plural. The Teraphim are again mentioned in the affair of Micah and the Danites. (Judges xvii. 5; xviii. 14, 17, 18, 20.) On that occasion gold consecrated to Jehovah is used for the purpose. It appears very probable, that the true God was worshipped in connexion with, or rather through the medium of, these Teraphim. We are also told, that God was at this place consulted, and the answer verified by the results.

It seems, from a careful review of the whole matter, that in these instances the Teraphim were imitations of the Cherubim. The first, of course, referred to the paradisiacal emblems, and were therefore perfectly consistent with, and perhaps decidedly auxiliary to, the worship of God, when rightly estimated and used: although, in the case of Laban, it is more than probable that they had obtained a degree of reverence bordering upon idolatry, as he calls them his "gods." Many instances occur in scripture, and in the profane history of ancient nations, confirmatory of this view. I will only glance at one which is curious.

Balaam, who, although he lived after the giving of the law, was, as a Gentile prophet, under the patriarchal dispensation, is known to have had intercourse with God, and to have delivered, under the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, some of the most

(Jehovah) "will come to meet me. And God met" him. "And the Lord" (Jehovah) "put a word in his mouth." (Num. xxiii. 3—5.) After the second sacrifice, he again said, "Stand here by thy burnt-offering, while I meet the Lord" (Jehovah) "yonder. And the Lord" (Jehovah) "met Balaam." (Verses 15, 16.) On the third occasion, our version gives us this statement: "When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, *he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments.*" (Num. xxiv. 1.) The preceding account clearly shows that at the "other times" he had gone to meet the Lord: how, then, is it said, "He went not, as at other times, *to seek enchantments?*" The terms in the original are לקראת נחשים "to meet the *nechashim.*" When, in the case of the plague of fiery serpents, Moses was commanded to make "a fiery serpent," it was termed, literally, (as has been previously noticed,) "a Seraph." And when recording the completion of the work, the lawgiver wrote, "And Moses made *a serpent of brass,*" (*nechash nechosheth,*) נחש נחשה (Num. xxi. 9;) so that the Hebrew term for "brass" or "copper" comes from the same root with *nechash*, "a serpent," as Dr. Adam Clarke supposes, because serpents have frequently a very bright glistening appearance, making them look like burnished brass. Consequently, while the same word is used to designate "a serpent," and a "bright brassy" colour or

the context, and seeing there is no evidence to prove that Balaam had at other times any recourse to divination, while it is certain that he waited upon and met Jehovah; Julius Bate has translated the words, "Balaam went not, as at other times, to meet *the appearances in fire*;" giving, as one reason for his version, this statement: "Had he gone before to seek enchantments, or play any conjuring tricks, there would be some room for construing his meeting the *nehashim* so; but the meeting Jehovah, and meeting *nehashim*, are directly equivalent. There was a species of divination expressed by this word; but here it is substituted for Jehovah, who had met him visibly before."*

In this, as in many other examples, there is no difficulty in perceiving the precise point at which a zealous, but common-sense and devout, student of holy scripture is compelled to stop short of Hutchinsonian interpretation. From a serious review of the subject investigated above, there appears no reason to doubt that when the seer of Mesopotamia came, at the request of the king of Moab, on this mission, he brought with him emblems of the primitive Cherubim, or Teraphim, which constituted his place of access to God, similar in object and design to that which was in the house of Isaac, where Rebekah "went to inquire of the Lord,"

described as going "to meet the Lord yonder." (Num. xxiii. 15.) That there was a stated place is, therefore, evident: and this place being described by the term *nechashim*, no doubt is left on the mind that there those patriarchal emblems constituted Balaam's way of access unto God. But that the manifestation of the Lord himself is characterized by this brasen or burning appearance, as Julius Bate supposes, is not countenanced by the scope of the subject, while it is open to many and weighty objections.

In precise accordance with this interpretation of these scenes in patriarchal religion, is the case of Micah and his Teraphim. The arrangements made by him were certainly intended to provide for himself and his family a private way of worshipping God. The means adopted for the purpose were, as nearly as possible, planned upon the model of the tabernacle. It was therefore only a violation of law inasmuch as it was an infraction of the unity of worship enjoined by the Mosaic code. But this does not appear to have prevented the Lord from answering inquiries devoutly put to him in that place.

The Teraphim had a place in the house of David. When Saul's persecution of him became

Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick. And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him. And when the messengers were come in, behold, there was *an image* in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster." (1 Sam. xix. 13—16.)

In this scripture the term rendered "an image" is *Teraphim*. It can scarcely be supposed that this was kept in David's house for any idolatrous purpose: it was, therefore, in all probability, very similar in design and use to the *Teraphim* of Laban and Micah,—a sort of imitation of Cherubim, for the purpose of providing a means of family or personal access unto God. The first particular, confirmatory of the view furnished by the passage under consideration, is the fact, that while there was evidently but one image, as it is justly rendered in our version,—for Michal would have completely defeated her own purpose, by placing two images in the bed,—the original term is plural, *Teraphim*. There must have been some reason for calling a single image by a plural name. Was it because, like the Cherubim, it had a plurality of heads? However this may be, its general outline must, to some extent, have corresponded to the human figure, as also did the form of the Cherubim. (Ezek. i. 5.)

There is so much difficulty connected with the

there is unusual repletion and ambiguity in the language of this clause. On these words Julius Bate remarks, "Put a net-work of goats' hair over 'its head;' for כביר rendered 'pillow,' is some sort of net-work, which is used in hot countries to sleep under, and to keep off troublesome insects. Exod. xxvii. 4, &c., it is a 'sieve' of 'net-work;' and 2 Kings viii. 15, a 'cloth;' and such a net, or 'grated canvass,' at some little distance from the face, would be an effectual blind, and prevent the face from being seen. Michal dressed up the bed like a sick-bed; hung up the net-work, laid the image along, and covered it with a coverlid, that it might look as if there was a man in it.—That the goats'-hair net was not a pillow for a bolster, but a blind over the heads, is plain, because the messengers did not discern the cheat when first sent, nor while they were bringing the bed and Teraphim to Saul."* Bishop Horsely supports this version: he renders the passage, "'And the net-work of goats' hair they placed about its pillows:—'the net-work of goats' hair;' that is, the mosquito-curtains."† Booth reads, "And Michal took the Teraphs, and put them in David's bed, and put a net of goats' hair at their head, and covered them with a cloth." This interpreta-

“things;” * and has consequently been frequently represented in the authorized version by “pillows” or “bolster.” It is probable, however, that in several passages it refers to something of a Teraph form or character. It has been supposed that the word is to be read in this sense, when used in reference to Jacob’s sleeping at Luz, (Gen. xxviii. 11,) as well as in the case of Saul: (1 Sam. xxvi. 7—16:) but on this it is not necessary to dwell.

The Teraphim were not only used in early times as simple emblems: they were afterwards prostituted to purposes of idolatry. Even in the days of Samuel this evil had begun; for, when denouncing the conduct of Saul, he said, “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and *idolatry*.” (1 Sam. xv. 23.) The word rendered “idolatry” is *Teraphim*. When the sacred writer is describing the religious reformation effected by Josiah, he says, he “put away the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the *images*, and the idols.” (2 Kings xxiii. 24.) The Hebrew term here translated “images” is *Teraphim*. When Ezekiel describes the king of Babylon as practising divination, to aid him in deciding whether to march first upon Rabbath of the Ammonites, or Jerusalem, he says, “He consulted with *images*.” (Ezek. xxi. 21.) These were Teraphim. The word is found in a few other passages of holy scripture, in all of which it confirms the view taken above:

tation of the cherubic emblems prevalent in patriarchal times, but afterward perverted to idolatrous uses.*

It will now be necessary to direct attention to the pages of the New Testament, in the hope of obtaining further information on this subject. If the visible and ceremonial elements of preceding dispensations were typical of spiritual works and blessings to be accomplished in Christ, and dispensed by his grace, there is every reason to expect that the clearest light will be cast upon their nature and character by Gospel revelations. And this expectation is not disappointed with regard to the Cherubim. For, although the New-Testament writers, using the Greek and not the Hebrew language, did not retain the term "Cherubim," but employed a word similar in sense to a designation applied to the same purpose by the prophet Ezekiel, it is clear that the cherubic figures are spoken of, and their symbolism explained, by St. John.

In the fourth and fifth chapters of the Apocalypse the inspired writer records an account of some wonderful revelations with which he was favoured. He saw in vision the throne of God in heaven, surrounded by living Cherubim and elders, with all the host of angelic powers, and heard their songs of

ation depends upon the presumed identity of the ζῶα of the apostle, (which I have ventured to call "living Cherubim,") with the "living creatures" or "Cherubim" of Ezekiel's vision. The similarity between the descriptions of these two sacred writers is by some authors regarded as so evident, that their intended identity is frequently taken for granted. Hence the learned Lowman, in his paraphrase on this book, invariably renders the ζῶα of the apostle by "Cherubim." If I were to follow my own convictions, I should adopt a similar course. But as some writers, even in the present day, deny the alleged identity of the living creatures of Ezekiel with those of St. John, I prefer placing the evidence fully before the reader, by setting down in parallel columns a comparison of the prominent features of both accounts.

PROPHECY OF EZEKIEL.

Out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. (i. 5.)

And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes round about. (x. 12.)

And every one had four

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures. (iv. 6.)

Full of eyes before and behind. And they [their wings] were full of eyes within. (6, 8.)

And the four living crea-

PROPHECY OF EZEKIEL.

ther the arms be not here represented as all covered with feathers, so that they had the appearance of wings : only the hands were bare. This would give to each living creature the appearance of six wings."

As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side : and they four had the face of an ox on the left side ; they four also had the face of an eagle. (i. 10.)

And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal. (22.)

And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone. (26.)

As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. (iv. 7.)

And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal. (6.)

And, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone. (2, 3.)

And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. (3.)

PROPHECY OF EZEKIEL.

the throne was the likeness
as the appearance of a man
above upon it. (26.)

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

the midst of the throne and of
the four living creatures, and
in the midst of the elders,
stood a Lamb as it had been
slain. (v. 6.)

In this comparison, the texts are so placed as to make each account as consecutive as is compatible with an arrangement of the several particulars in juxta-position. I have availed myself of both the descriptions of Ezekiel, contained in the first and tenth chapters of his prophecy; selecting from each the portions which appear to afford the most clear and complete description. For this reason the twelfth and twenty-first verses of the tenth chapter have been given in preference to the corresponding portions of the first chapter.

In carrying out this comparison, it must be remembered that these two accounts were not written by two contemporary authors, living under the same circumstances, using the same language, and writing for the same purpose. The inspired men whose productions are thus placed beside each other, flourished in different ages, Ezekiel preceding John by five hundred years. The first had to communicate religious knowledge to the Hebrews in the most perilous crisis of their history: the other was called to build up the Christian church in its early strug-

judgment; while John had to exhibit the glorious accomplishment of prophecy, the certain acceptance of the great Atonement for the world's redemption, and the establishment in heaven of a gracious economy for the salvation of man, in which the types of preceding dispensations were all fulfilled and verified. The prophet was called to minister consolation and guidance to his people amid national ruin and unexampled temptations: the apostle's inspired design was to raise a standing memorial of gospel truth for the support and consolation of the church during her struggles and conflicts throughout all time. When these different times, circumstances, and objects of the two sacred writers are fairly considered, it may be asked with unhesitating confidence, Supposing they referred to the same emblems, and recognised the same symbolism, what greater degree of harmony could we expect to find in their productions?

But the identity of the Cherubim with the living creatures of the Apocalypse shall not be assumed. Let the descriptions be carefully compared. The attentive reader will, of course, discern some discrepancies. Ezekiel makes his living creatures a compound of four animal forms; while John, in his briefer description, apparently places before us four living creatures of more simple conformation,—a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle. It is, however,

them ζῶα, "living creatures," and have said that the first was "*like a lion,*" the second "*like a calf,*" and the third "*had a face as a man,*" and that the fourth "*was like a flying eagle.*" Their wings and numerous eyes are further proofs that they had not the simple form of so many single animals, but, on the contrary, that they, to a considerable extent, resembled the cherubic figure. It is, indeed, very probable that these discrepancies arise from the brevity of St. John's description; and that if he had written as diffusely as Ezekiel, all the apparent disagreement would have been removed. There is another difference, in respect of the number of wings ascribed to the living creatures, in these several accounts; unless, indeed, as is very likely, the ingenious conjecture of Dr. Adam Clarke is allowed to have removed that difficulty.

A third verbal discrepance between the prophet and the apostle respects the appearance seated upon the throne. But this variation, instead of militating against the identity of the subject of the two visions, on the contrary, strengthens it greatly. The throne in each instance appears to have been a glorious elevation of the propitiatory, as was that which Isaiah saw in the temple. But the manifestation made to Ezekiel, beside being intended to confirm revealed truth, was a prelude to judgment upon an apostate church; while the revelation to John, referring also to ulterior objects in the history of gos-

Regarded in this aspect, the vision of Ezekiel added considerably to the amount of light which revealed truth had previously cast upon the scheme of redemption. The promises recorded in history, and the noble inspirations of prophecy, had already done much. Isaiah had sung of a child born, a Son given, on whose shoulder should be the government, and who was the Prince of peace: but the prophet of Chebar was, perhaps, the first to realize all these predictions, and to see the likeness of a man upon the throne, with a rainbow around the throne,—a vision of the incarnation accomplished, with the certain pledge of its perfect fulfilment. John, on the other hand,—who had stood by the cross, and had witnessed the mortal agony of Him who died as the world's Atonement; who had participated in the Spirit's effusion on the day of Pentecost, and beheld its blessed results in the salvation of men,—John had a mission so far in advance of Ezekiel, that the great act of humiliation which issued in the incarnation, and which was visibly attested to the prophet, was not only actually accomplished before his eyes, but he had to proclaim the fact, and to show forth the efficacy of all its promised and predicted results. Therefore while one saw the "appearance of a man upon the throne" as a pledge of the predicted incarnation, the other beheld "a Lamb as it had been slain" in the midst of the throne; a proof that the redemption-scheme had been fully executed, the atonement made, and

the world. Instead, therefore, of this difference in the visions militating against my interpretation, it gives it strong confirmation.

In every other particular the accounts coincide. The general plan, the machinery, the obvious scope and design of both, are the same. Let the reader pass his eye over the parallel columns, throughout the eight sections which are given, and let me ask, Is there not a most remarkable agreement? Is there not every proof of identity which the subject seems to allow? To object, as some have done, that the living creatures in those visions cannot be identical, because those spoken of in the Apocalypse are *redeemed*, and the other *angelic*,—is to beg the question at issue, and to force a meaning upon the word of truth. Let any unbiassed mind pursue the legitimate course of inquiry,—*comparing scripture with scripture*, and I feel confident the conclusion will be, that the living creatures described by the prophet, and those by the apostle, are the self-same symbolic figures of the same archetype; and that both are similar in object to the Cherubim of the sanctuary, subject only to such variations in form and appearance as were required by the changing circumstances and peculiar wants of the church.

Being led by this investigation to regard the apocalyptic vision as similar in scope and reference to that so forcibly described by the prophet Ezekiel, it becomes important to ascertain the further amount

gather from this sublime scripture, refers not solely to the Cherubim, but explains the symbolism of the propitiatory in general, with all its sacred accompaniments. When the apostle saw the door opened in heaven, and was called up thither, he says, "Immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain." (Rev. iv. 2—6; v. 6.) St. Paul, when speaking of the sacred things of the sanctuary, calls them, "the patterns of things in the heavens;" and says, that "it was necessary they should be purified with" the blood of calves and of goats; "but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. ix. 12, 23, 24.) This language of the great apostle is an exposition of the typical character of the most holy place in the

of this heavenly archetype; which does not indeed burst suddenly upon the vision of the apostle, but is gradually developed. He at first saw a throne, surrounded by twenty-four seats, on which twenty-four elders sat, clothed in white raiment, and having crowns of gold on their heads; "and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne," were four living creatures of cherubic form. This was clearly an exhibition of the heavenly mercy-seat, the great antitype of the propitiatory. But it had not a Shekinah of glory such as had been seen in the tabernacle and temple: "One sat upon the throne;" but he that occupied this royal seat does not seem to have been distinctly perceived by the apostle; rapt in spirit though he was, an undefined glory, as of a jasper or sardine stone, was all the description which he could give of the Divine Being. But in this initial prospect he saw a rainbow about the throne, a well-known token and pledge that the whole of the predicted and promised purpose of God should be certainly accomplished. The apostle still gazed upon these heavenly things, and saw the worship rendered by the elders and the living Cherubim, and heard their ascriptions of glorious praise and honour to God. He heard and saw more. "The Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David," is declared to have accomplished the work which no other in earth or heaven was found worthy or able to do: (Rev. v.

seded; the obscurity is removed; the occupant of the throne is fully revealed; and, lo, it is "a Lamb as it had been slain." (Verse 6.) Then "the living Cherubim and four-and-twenty elders sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Verses 8, 9.)

Whatever obscurity may rest on other parts of this mysterious book, however inscrutable to human ingenuity and learning the prophetic figures and language of the Apocalypse in general may be, it seems scarcely possible to find serious difficulty in that portion which has just passed under our notice. It displays the propitiatory in the heavens, sprinkled with the sacrificial blood of the appointed Lamb; living Cherubim, as witnesses of the prevalence of the Atonement, attest its saving efficacy; the united predictions of all prophecy are fulfilled,* and the

* One of these prophecies, the true meaning of which has been greatly overlooked, appears to have a very precise reference to this case, and therefore to merit special notice. When Daniel received from the angel a predictive detail of the blessings which would accrue to mankind from the death of Messiah, the catalogue of these wonderful results of his passion closes with the clause, "To anoint the most Holy." (Dan.

end of the types and shadows of the Mosaic dispensation stand before us in all their grand results, all their living reality. The true mercy-seat in the tabernacle on high is become "the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," where our great High Priest sitteth, "the Mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises." (Heb. viii. 1, 6.) Here we have the key to the whole vision; and, consequently, important light is cast upon the subject of our inquiry.

2. But, further, this vision clearly shows us that the living creatures here described are neither angels

Prince;" because, although the term "Messiah" literally means no more than "the Anointed," it has been so generally used by us to designate God's long-promised and anointed One, who is our Redeemer, that the meaning of the word, as referring to a special manner of appointment or induction to office, is, in fact, lost, in its application to the glorious person and vicarious work of Christ. In the clause under consideration, the original term, rendered "anoint," is the verb answering to the adjective which, in the following verse, is very properly carried untranslated into our version, "MESSIAH." If, therefore, our translators had dealt with verse 24 as they did with verse 25, they would have rendered this clause, "To MESSIANIZE the most Holy;" thus giving the true sense. The prophecy speaks of the consummation of the Divine purpose in the removal of all that was merely typical, and the establishment of the fulness and reality of the scheme of redemption. In a word, it predicts the abolition of all

nor symbolic emblems of angelic nature. It is true, they are described as “in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne;” and many commentators have hence inferred that they were intended to represent angels of the highest rank. It cannot, however, escape observation, that they are represented as most intimately associated with the four-and-twenty elders. Moreover the song which they sang is such as angels could not sing. This is decisive. I am aware that learning and ingenuity have been employed to avert, or qualify, the proof here rendered. It has been attempted to show that the song was sung by the elders alone, and not by the living creatures: but the effort has failed. “The grammatical argument,” although pronounced “favourable,”—a judgment to which I feel disposed to demur,—is admitted “to be indecisive.” But we are told, “It is generally considered, and with reason, that they, (the elders,) and not the ζῶα, have the ‘harps,’ and the ‘golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.’” In defence of this opinion, as the grammatical construction of the passage cannot be made to give it any support, it is alleged that “it hardly consists with the animal forms of these emblematic ζῶα, (chap. iv. 7,) to assign the harps and vials to them; and as little does this chant (chap. v. 9) agree with the statement, that the ζῶα restlessly cry.

First, as to the allegation that it does not consist with the animal forms of these emblematic creatures, to assign to them the harps and vials. Of course, this assertion is to be understood as referring mainly to their having no hands. I seriously question whether, in respect of figurative emblems, this is a legitimate objection. I doubt whether in this case it is proper to scrutinize the *manner* in which such compounded emblematic creatures could perform the functions ascribed to them.* But, waving this demur, is it not as conceivable that a lion, a calf, or an eagle, should hold a harp and a vial, as that they should restlessly cry, "Holy, holy, holy," &c.? With the utmost deference to those who urge this argument, I submit that if they reject the one act on the ground of its incompatibility with an animal form, they are equally bound to repudiate the other. Or, if this ascription of praise must be admitted as proceeding even from these animal forms, it being stated so explicitly in the sacred text that it can neither be denied nor doubted, then this form must not be pleaded as incompatible with the performance of other functions. Further, the account which the apostle gives is not sufficiently minute and circumstantial to sustain the objection. Take a similar case:—Isaiah describes the Seraphim which appeared in his vision as having six wings. No one,

guided by the verbal description which the prophet gives of these symbolical creatures, would imagine them capable of any of those functions performed by the hands of man. Yet, when an important office was to be performed, one of them flew, having a live coal in *his hand*, which he had taken with tongs from the altar, and applied it to the prophet's lips. (Isai. vi. 6.) Thus is demonstrated the utter futility of reasoning from the verbally-described forms of emblematical appearances.

The argument, that the ζῶα, "living creatures," could not have taken part in this new song, because of their *restlessly* crying, "Holy, holy, holy," &c. is equally unsubstantial. The application of this term, as exhibiting unceasing aspirations of praise to God in this precise language, must be limited to this period of the vision. It was so with Isaiah's Seraphim; they are described as similarly occupied: yet one of them could cease in a moment, to minister purification and blessing to the prophet. In like manner, in the apostle's vision, the four living creatures, although said to "rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy," &c. (Rev. iv. 8,) are just immediately after heard to respond to the song of the angels: for "the four beasts said, Amen." (Rev. v. 14.) Again, immediately afterward, "when the Lamb opened one of the seals, one of the four living creatures" was heard "saying, Come and see." (Rev. vi. 1.) On another occasion, "the four-and-

passages in this book (see vii. 12; xv. 7) show that the terms which speak of the uniform and continuous ascriptions of the four living creatures, must not be construed so rigorously as to exclude their occasional use of other language, or attention to other objects. They cannot, therefore, be used with any effect against the common-sense view of the text referred to, (Rev. v. 8, 9,) which teaches that they, with the elders, sang the song of the redeemed.

The living Cherubim of the apocalyptic vision are thus identified with the subjects of redemption, and cannot, therefore, be regarded as emblematical of angels. A further proof of this is found in the fact that angels are, in the following verses, specially and distinctly spoken of. After the song of the living creatures and elders was ended, they were joined by the angelic host. "And I beheld," says the apostle, "and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." (Rev. v. 11.) Here a multitude of angels are described as surrounding the throne and living creatures and elders, and the whole assembly join in an anthem of praise, using language in which all could unite, "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the

and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” (Verse 13.) Can this whole account be read, and a doubt be entertained of the perfect truth of the proposition which has been laid down,—namely, that these living Cherubim were not symbolical of angelic nature? Would the representatives be appointed to appear and act, where the whole company was assembled? Should we have angelic nature represented by living creatures in immediate connexion with the elders, and these surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand angels? What can be the object of such symbolism? what, the design of introducing figurative representatives of angels, where scarcely any but the angel host appear? Whatever, then, may be the true character of cherubic symbolism, the angelic nature could not have been the object which it was intended to represent.

3. But this vision not only removes every reason for associating the cherubic figures with angelic representation: it also clearly explains their symbolic character. It will be necessary here to refer again to the language of the new song which these living creatures, in connexion with the elders, are said to have sung: “Thou wast slain, and hast

elders, of the number of the redeemed. They ascribe their redemption to the blood of the Lamb, in words which do not admit of a double meaning. Nor are we left to any uncertain speculation as to the inhabitants of any other sphere participating in the blessed results of this sacrifice, or as to its exercising any mysterious influence on angelic nature. These creatures were redeemed from among mankind: they came "from every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

The living creatures of the apocalyptic vision must, therefore, be held to represent the redeemed church of God: not any section of this church, nor any class of its members, but the great body of believers in the Atonement throughout all ages, countries, and nations. The terms in which the universality of this symbolism is declared, are remarkable. At the time when John saw this vision, but a very small portion of the human family had even heard of the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" very few, comparatively, had believed on him. Yet those who sang this song avowed themselves to be representatives of the redeemed from "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." The vision, therefore, in this most important particular, did not exhibit to the eye of the apostle an accomplished fact, but a glorious prophecy of the success of Messiah's kingdom. These heavenly Cherubim are thus shown to occupy a position remarkably similar to that sustained by the cherubim

ment. Here all who ever derived spiritual life from the great Sacrifice, or who shall throughout all time realize its blessings, are placed in this figurative or representative manner around the throne of grace in the heavens. In the midst of this throne the Lamb of God appears as he had been slain. Here the redeemed ascribe their salvation to his blood, and extol Him who sits upon the throne; while innumerable hosts of angels surround these trophies of grace, and unite with them in a general song of thanksgiving to the Most High. It is difficult to make the views which I have propounded clearer than they appear in the simple narration of the apostle. The careful reader will, however, observe the strong terms in which the living creatures are stated to be the subjects of redemption,—the various expressions by which they are identified with the whole body of the redeemed,—and the guarded manner in which all reference to personal redemption is excluded when angels unite in the song, or nature joins in the praise. Nothing could be more evident than that the living creatures were designed to represent the great body of believers in the Redeemer.

But it may be asked, “What, then, are we to understand by ‘the elders?’” On this question I do not wish to express myself with undue confidence. And if I should reply by saying, “I do not know,” I am not sure that this admission would at all affect my main argument. Yet I am free to

mon to every dispensation of grace. The fathers were the religious teachers of the patriarchal age, and the religious guides and representatives of the patriarchal church. (Exod. iii. 16; xii. 21.) Under the Mosaic dispensation, not only were judges and magistrates, who were appointed to administer and sustain the divinely authorized laws of the Hebrew theocracy, distinguished by this name, but—which is worthy of more special attention—this term designated the persons who were endued by God with the spirit of prophecy, that by their teaching and influence they might strengthen the cause of truth and righteousness among the people. (Num. xi. 25.) Elders were continued throughout the whole course of Hebrew history. (Ezra v. 5.) When the gospel was published, it was also the term most frequently applied in the New-Testament writings to the Christian ministry. There can, therefore, be scarcely a doubt that by “the elders” in this vision we are to understand primarily and particularly the Christian ministry, and then generally those, in all ages and under every dispensation, who have been called of God, and qualified by the grace of his Holy Spirit, to inculcate the great doctrines of revealed truth, and to teach the way of faith in the Great Atonement. So that, in this respect also, those who surround the throne verify another prediction of Daniel: “They that be wise” (or, *margin*, “teachers”) “shall shine

clothed in white raiment, with crowns on their heads, shadowed forth the faithful ministers of the grace of God, who, prominent in deeds of holy effort on earth, are distinguished in glory on high.

Having investigated every portion of scripture bearing upon the subject of the Cherubim, and endeavoured, as far as possible, to understand their meaning, I shall now proceed to arrange the instruction furnished by these several portions of holy writ, in the hope thereby to obtain a more comprehensive and correct view of the whole subject.

On entering upon this part of my inquiry, I may observe in passing, that not only is the subject difficult in itself, but its investigation is, according to the judgment of some persons, opposed by the authority of holy scripture. An observation of the apostle Paul is sometimes cited in a prohibitory sense, for the purpose of sustaining this opinion: "And over it the Cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly." (Heb. ix. 5.) I think, however, that a very sufficient answer might be given to this objection, even if the language of the apostle had, as is supposed by the parties referred to, been specially directed to the Cherubim. But this does not appear to be the case. The following judgment of an eminent critic will perhaps be thought sufficient to

and of all the various utensils of the sanctuary, is not what he intends to give: *i. e.* he shall content himself with merely having suggested those which were already named."* The apostle no more alludes to the Cherubim than he does to the ark; nor does he throw any greater difficulty in the way of an investigation into the symbolical import of the one than of an examination into the typical character of the other.

It may be necessary here also to remind the reader, that the several portions of scripture to which attention is to be directed, range over the entire period of revelation. We meet the subject of our inquiry on the threshold of Paradise; and find it frequently referred to throughout the Mosaic economy, and preserved in mind and spoken of at the close of the scriptural canon. In these circumstances, although it is not only important, but absolutely necessary, to select certain topics more or less prominently set forth in the several portions of holy scripture which speak of the Cherubim, and, by induction from them and the manner of their connexion, to endeavour to ascertain the sense of holy writ on this important subject; it must not be supposed that no discrepancy of thought or language will be found in this investigation, or that perfect uniformity will be exhibited in the form, manner, and import of the several appearances which are thus

enced the sacred writers, the different aspects under which the great purposes of grace were presented to their view, and the various and peculiar circumstances of the case of each of them, as well as their diverse personal genius and habits, forbid the expectation of entire conformity. Yet, notwithstanding all obvious causes of discrepancy, less real difference and change will be found in regard to the subject of our inquiry, than might reasonably have been anticipated; while, in the most important respects, the grand features which from the beginning distinguish cherubic symbolism are seen to pass almost unchanged into the several succeeding dispensations of grace, evincing every where the great purpose of God in the economy of redemption.

1. In referring to these general characteristics of the subject, I first call attention to the fact, that the Cherubim appear to be always connected with a special and visible revelation of the Divine Presence. In the application of this and other general views, I shall invariably give priority of notice to those passages which bear upon this subject in the New Testament, and thence proceed in inverse order, so as to consider last of all, the passage which occurs first in the order of time. (Gen. iii. 24.) This course appears to be not merely the most expedient, but the only reasonable and legitimate one. In our attempts to estimate the religious knowledge and

object is to ascertain the purpose of God in these dispensations, or to discover the true character and import of their types and symbols, then our only hope of success lies in a judicious application of New-Testament truth. It is the light of the gospel which alone explains the obscurities of the Old-Testament scriptures.

In showing that the Cherubim are everywhere exhibited in immediate connexion with a visible revelation of the Divine Presence, reference will be first made to the vision of the Apocalypse. There is not, indeed, in the apostle's account of this vision, any express declaration of the Divine Presence as such; but there are, notwithstanding, ample proofs of a real manifestation of God in connexion with the living creatures and the elders. The mention of a throne in heaven would of itself be a sufficient indication of the presence of the Divine Majesty. Who but the Almighty and Eternal One could occupy that glorious seat? The evidence of the reality of the Divine Presence is, in fact, the more decisive, as it does not rest upon a single declaration, but rather on a general description, the entire scope of which teaches this truth. "Out of the throne," the apostle says, "proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." (Rev. iv. 5.) This exhibition, be it remembered, refers to the throne, before "the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David" had accomplished

Majesty, and the anger of God against sin. The seven lamps of fire burning before the throne are explained to mean "the seven Spirits of God." This form of expression, I have no doubt, clearly indicates the Holy Ghost, in his true and proper Divinity. I am well aware that some learned critics and commentators dissent from this opinion, and argue that these "seven Spirits" are angels employed by God to carry out the purposes of his providence in the world.

This notion rests mainly upon a passage in the following chapter, where the same expression occurs, and where it is said that "the seven Spirits of God" are "sent forth into all the earth." (Rev. v. 6.) As that text will almost immediately come under consideration, it will be desirable previously to refer to the first passage in which the phrase is employed by the inspired apostle. In the introductory benediction of this book he writes, "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead," &c. (Rev. i. 4, 5.) In this form of blessing, where grace, mercy, and peace are prayed for, to come from three parties respectively, of whom the first is spoken of as possessing the unquestionable attributes of Jehovah, and the third is certainly the

tolitic benediction, nor the character of the blessings supplicated, allow any place for the supposition that the phrase, "seven Spirits of God," in this connexion, can mean any other than the Holy Ghost. The words unquestionably bear the same sense in the text already referred to: "In the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." (Rev. v. 6.) As a horn is the emblem of power, and seven the number of perfection, it is freely admitted that the seven horns denote the all-prevailing power and infinite might of Jesus Christ. Why, then, should we not understand the seven eyes to represent his infinite knowledge and wisdom, exercised in the establishment of his kingdom through the agency and influence of the Holy Ghost? This idea at once accords with the explicit teaching of scripture as to the gift and operations of the Holy Spirit, and offers a consistent explication of the text. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit as seven lamps before the throne, is evidently a reference to the golden candlestick of the sanctuary, which had seven lights or lamps: and this circumstance affords additional evidence that the whole vision was designed to exhibit the heavenly antitype which had been shadowed forth by the sacred things of the Mosaic tabernacle. If, however, the argument be re-

although “of the tribe of Juda,” and “the Root of David,” is also “over all, God blessed for ever.” (Rom. ix. 5.)

The vision of Ezekiel affords a further illustration of the fact that the Divine Presence is always stated to attend the cherubic figures in a visible form. For, although on that occasion there was seen “the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon” the throne, the glory was “the glory of the LORD.” (Ezek. i. 26, 28.) This was clearly intended to mark out the real presence of Deity; for the term used by the prophet (כבוד *kebod*) to designate “the *glory* of the God of Israel,” (Ezek. ix. 3,) is the same word which was employed by Moses to point out the visible presence of Jehovah: “The *glory* of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai.” (Exod. xxiv. 16.) This word occurs also in the description of that special revelation of the Divine Presence which was made to Moses: “And it shall come to pass, while my *glory* passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock.” (Exod. xxxiii. 22.) But lest this point should be regarded as open to any doubt, Ezekiel distinctly assures us that “the God of Israel” appeared above the living creatures on the banks of the river Chebar. (Ezek. x. 20.)

If I have been correct in regarding the vision of Isaiah as of a similar character to that of Ezekiel,

occupying their accustomed position above it. (Isai. vi. 1—5.)

Of this indwelling of the Divine Presence we have an eminent instance in the temple and tabernacle. This was, indeed, God's purpose, plainly and repeatedly declared. "Let them," said the God of Israel, "make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." (Exod. xxv. 8.) The gracious promise was accordingly given: "The tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God." (Exod. xxix. 43, 45.) The precise spot which was to be the place of the Divine inhabitation is also clearly defined: "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two Cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony." (Exod. xxv. 22.) All this was accomplished: and from the day in which the tabernacle was consecrated and filled with the glory of the Lord, to that in which Ezekiel says, "The glory of the Lord went up from the Cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house," (Ezek. x. 4,) the most significant and emphatic expression used to address the Lord of hosts was, "Thou that dwellest between the Cherubims." (Psalm lxxx. 1.)

But it will probably be objected, that the text in Genesis which speaks of the Cherubim being

connexion with these sacred symbols, it was not so previously. This objection requires careful investigation. It may be observed, *in limine*, that, as the definite article is in the Hebrew found united to the term "Cherubim" in this text, it is an undoubted fact that the Cherubim of Paradise were of the same character as those afterward placed in the Hebrew sanctuary. The order of events, and the circumstances in which Moses wrote the Pentateuch, and his relation to those for whose benefit it was written, render this conclusion certain. Whatever records of antediluvian history might have existed previously, it is certain that the books of Moses, as now found in the scriptures, were written and placed in the hands of the Israelites after the tabernacle was erected, and its sacred service had been brought into regular operation. When, therefore, the Hebrews of that day read, that, in connexion with a rolling or infolding flame, "the CHERUBIM" were placed or located before, or at the east of, Eden, they would reasonably conclude such a form of expression to teach that this primitive exhibition of those figures had some analogy of appearance and object to those of the same name which existed in their sanctuary. The mention, therefore, of "the Cherubim" would, in the circumstances, be sufficient to indicate the seat of the Divine Presence, as that was the great benefit

of mankind as the place of the presence of the Lord. Hence we read, "that Cain *brought* of the fruit of the ground an offering *unto the Lord*. And Abel, he also *brought* of the firstlings of his flock," &c. (Gen. iv. 3, 4.) And after the murder of his brother, the bitterest part of Cain's punishment was thus lamented by him: "From **THY FACE** shall I be hid." (Verse 14.) But the sentence was executed, and "Cain went out *from the presence* of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod." (Verse 16.) All which language clearly shows that even when the whole of mankind were but one family, they lived in immediate connexion with, and had access to, a certain specified place, which was regarded as the seat of the Divine Presence. And, although the assertion may occasion surprise, I venture to say that the appointment of this Divine location is stated in the passage to which I have referred, Gen. iii. 24. The verb שָׁכַן as found in the text, is uniformly, throughout the scriptures, translated by the cognate terms, "dwell, abide, inhabit," which imply the residence of a living agent. Guided by this principle, Mr. Tomlinson renders the clause, "He (Jehovah) dwelt, or tabernacled, in the Cherubim."* And the Septuagint, giving a different sense to the words, but adhering to the personal application of the verb, renders the text, "And he cast out Adam, and caused him to dwell over against the garden of delights."† It

is difficult to reconcile this version with the present Hebrew text: and if the rendering of Mr. Tomlinson is objected to, because the verb in this passage is found in the hiphil or causative form, I think the solution must be found, not in the personal character of the Cherubim, but in that of the infolding fire, which, here as elsewhere, indicated the Divine Presence; as, for instance, in the tabernacle, and the bush at Horeb.

This opinion is greatly strengthened, and light is cast upon the general question of cherubic symbolism, by the manner in which the Divine Presence is always spoken of in connexion with the Cherubim. Throughout the whole history of Hebrew religion, until we meet with the poetic imagery of Ezekiel's vision, there is not the slightest allusion to the Cherubim as having life or animation. On the contrary, in every case where we find the presence of the Lord spoken of in our authorized version, as sitting or dwelling between the Cherubim, it will be found that the word "*between*" is printed in italics, to show that there is no word in the Hebrew corresponding to it. The original simply speaks of "dwelling" or "inhabiting" the Cherubim. (See 2 Sam. vi. 2; 2 Kings xix. 15; 1 Chron. xiii. 6; Psalm lxxx. 1; and Isai. xxxvii. 16.) And the description of Ezekiel, although differing in the form of expression, is no exception to this rule: for, in that case, the Spirit is described as

character of the personal Presence which stood connected with these symbolic figures. But such a form of speech not only establishes the fact of the Divine Presence in the Cherubim ; it also affords important information respecting their symbolical character. It demonstrates that these figures could not have been intended to represent the Divine Nature in the Persons of the Trinity. For, surely, the scripture will not be supposed to teach, that the Divine Presence inhabited himself, or the symbol of himself. Nor does this mode of description accord with any scriptural doctrine respecting the holy angels. They were created pure, and have maintained their purity. They are therefore never spoken of as inhabited by the Deity, or as the recipients of his indwelling Spirit. This is the ruling element of redemption. Man is thus raised from the ruins of the fall, and made meet for heavenly glory. This is, in fact, the great principle of the gospel,—“Christ in you :” (Col. i. 27 :) “Led by the Spirit :” (Rom. viii. 14 :) he “is our life.” (Col. iii. 4.) Amid the perfect and significant types and symbols of the Old Testament, does this striking circumstance stand without object and meaning? Is it doubtful who are symbolized by the cherubic figures, when they are always spoken of as inhabited by Deity?

presumption that redeemed man is the object of their symbolism.

2. A further prosecution of our inquiry into the general teaching of holy scripture on the subject of the Cherubim shows, that they are also continually identified with the Incarnation, and sacrificial Atonement.

In the passage quoted from the book of Revelation, both these points are remarkably prominent. The Lamb standing "as it had been slain," offers a most significant exhibition of vicarious sacrifice. The Lamb "stood" indeed: he did not appear as dead, but with all the marks of recent slaughter upon him. As he had been prepared for oblation, and had suffered death, in his wounds and in his blood he "stood in the midst of the throne," a living and splendid proof of an efficient and accepted sacrifice,—a glorious exhibition of a triumphant and reigning Saviour. Nor was this simply an incidental circumstance in the apocalyptic vision. It was the grand feature, the principal point, of it. We consequently find, that immediately after this manifestation of the sacrificial Lamb upon the throne was made, the elders and living creatures fell down and worshipped the Lamb, and hymned his high praises. But it was not his high descent, or glorious exaltation, or regal dignity, but his sacri-

the Incarnation. John knew who had been pointed out to Israel as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) He had witnessed—amid all the horrors of Calvary—the sacrificial rites, the Lamb slain. The incarnate character of Him who occupied the throne in this vision is, indeed, explicitly declared. He was "the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David." The vision, therefore, whilst it places under our observation the throne of God surrounded by living Cherubim, presents as its great subject the Incarnation and Atonement as fully accomplished, and crowned with triumphant and glorious success.

As the object of Ezekiel's vision was to exhibit the approaching judgment of an apostate people, and their fearful punishment, it scarcely affords an opportunity for a display of propitiation. We consequently do not meet with any nearer allusion to it than is implied in the presence of the Shekinah leaving the most holy place, and passing away with the living Cherubim. This vision, however, gave very important and intelligible information respecting the Incarnation. Here the Glory of the God of Israel was displayed to the eye of the prophet with surpassing pomp and majesty. The Cherubim, full of life, instinct with spirit, moved beneath the throne of God. He that occupied the throne exer-

kinah itself, after resting on the threshold of the temple, arose and "stood over the Cherubims," (Ezek. x. 18,) and thus became identified with Him who sat upon the throne. And yet, with all these proofs of the wisdom, power, and glory of the Divine Presence we have the wonderful announcement, that "upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it." (Ezek. i. 26.) If this appearance can be explained on any other principle than that of its being a glorious exhibition of fulfilled promise and prophecy in the predicted Incarnation of the Son of God, I am utterly unable to discover how it is to be done.

But, regarded in the aspect in which we view it, the vision of Ezekiel presents to our devout attention an amount of instruction worthy the splendour of its scenery, and the grandeur of its design. On this principle of interpretation, all the darkness and difficulty which Hebrew apostasy had gathered around the saving purposes of God are removed, and new and efficient light is shed over the cause of revealed truth, and the development of the grand work of redemption. Israel was the elect people of the Lord: as such, they had been raised to great civil, political, and religious elevation. Yet, up to this time, all the power and glory which they had attained, were, according to the national faith, as nothing in comparison with the high standard they were destined to reach. Inspired poets had sung of

tains, and all nations were to flow unto them. This greatness and glory were, however, declared to be dependent on the appearance and superhuman exploits of a promised Messiah, the predicted Seed of the woman. The original promise respecting this mighty Redeemer had been confirmed and limited successively to the family of Abraham, to the tribe of Judah, and to the house of David. With his name and reign the Israel of God were to be crowned with peace and salvation, extending "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." (Psalm lxxii. 8.)

To these promises the Hebrews of Ezekiel's time clung with an intensely ardent, but superstitious, faith, even when their idolatry, violence, and licentiousness provoked the Lord, and called down his just judgments on the nation: So that while avowing a strong confidence in their relation to Jehovah, they had reached the climax of their guilt, and national ruin impended over them. The sublime vision of which Ezekiel was the spectator, was designed with wonderful wisdom to meet this emergency. God came in his glory to judge his people: he exposed the dark recesses of their crimes, the hidden chambers of their idolatrous imagery. The few who still remained faithful, and lamented abounding iniquity, were marked and saved; the wicked were doomed to destruction. But amidst the ruin of the Hebrew state and capital, the priesthood

sighted man; so even the pious, but doubting, Hebrews feared: but the treasures of Divine Wisdom met the fearful crisis with adequate provisions, and even rendered it the occasion of a further development of the Divine purpose, and a clearer attestation of its certain accomplishment. Even the living wheels that rolled under the throne of judgment, and the infolding fire, which at once exhibited the Divine Presence and the Divine wrath, bore to the sight of the rapt seer glorious evidence of the fidelity of God, demonstrative proof that the kingdom of his Messiah should yet be established in the earth. In the centre of this glorious appearance,—from the very throne whence issued the behest to save the faithful remnant, and the command to destroy the wicked,—from that seat whence came the mandate which laid in one common ruin every visible type of Messiah's reign, every pledge which remained on earth of God's covenant-engagements in respect of redemption,—from that throne arose clearer evidence of its certain approach, more glorious proofs of its undoubted accomplishment, than the world had ever seen. From that throne, bearing the Glory of the God of Israel, arose the likeness of a man! On the throne of God, encompassed with the glory of God, a man appeared,—the Son, long promised,—the predicted Seed of the woman, with the government on his shoulder! And, to remove all danger of misconception, to give the fullest assurance to the tried

glorious pledge that the great purpose of God in the redemption of the world by an incarnate Redeemer should be surely accomplished.

Learned men may regard this vision as referring only to the marvellous dispensations and resources of Divine Providence. Such a reference it most certainly has: but it is equally evident that this exhibition of providential government refers mainly to the scheme of redemption, and to the great purposes of grace. It is providence exercised and controlled by the Son of God, with reference to, and in preparation for, his marvellous incarnation, and the establishment of his gospel kingdom.

The vision of Isaiah furnishes a further illustration of these cardinal truths. It does not contain, we must admit, any specific reference to the Incarnation; but it is certain that the Divine Presence, which was there so gloriously revealed, was the second Person of the Trinity, the Divine Logos. This is demonstrated by explicit New-Testament teaching. St. John, in his Gospel, referring to this vision as a revelation of Christ, says, "These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of HIM." (John xii. 41.) And although there is in the description of this vision no immediate allusion to sacrifice, the efficacy of vicarious atonement is shown in the most explicit and impressive manner.

taking away his iniquity, and purging his sin? It was the application of "a live coal," which had been "taken from off the altar." (Verse 6.) Is it possible for symbolic agency and efficacy to be more strikingly exhibited? The victim slain to expiate sin, consumed by fire to attest the destroying action of Divine wrath, having thus personated the sinner, and borne his curse, the remains of the oblation are applied to the culprit, who, partaking of the vicarious merit, is immediately purged and saved. An instance like this explains the *rationalité* of expiatory sacrifice better than a thousand formal precepts, and strikingly exhibits the connexion of the Cherubim with the great mediatorial and redeeming purpose of God.

If, from these glowing scenes, we turn to the Cherubim of the temple and tabernacle, additional and ample proof is found that they are immediately associated with atonement for sin through the blood of sacrifice. This fact is so strikingly unfolded in the Mosaic ritual and history, that it is altogether unnecessary to adduce any further specific evidence in its support. It may, however, be desirable to consider briefly the prominent position which the sacred figures of the Hebrew sanctuary occupied in this respect.

fices throughout the year, which were equally necessary; for they were commanded: and their object was the same; for they made expiation for sin. (Exod. xxix. 36.) All of them were, therefore, included in, and represented by, the sacrifice on the great day of atonement: and the pre-eminent excellency of this annual offering arose, clearly, from its appointment as more immediately a type of the one great sacrifice of Christ. For as the high priest bore the sacrificial blood into the holy place, (Lev. xvi. 3,) so Christ "by his own blood entered into the holy place" in the heavens. (Heb. ix. 12.) As the high priest did this "once in the year," (Exod. xxx. 10,) so Christ "entered in once" for all. The atonement which was made between the Cherubim is, therefore, to be regarded as the entire expiation wrought out through sacrificial blood for the whole people. Reference has already been made to the peculiar connexion of the Cherubim with this typical propitiation. They arose into being out of the seat of an applied atonement, and stood in immediate connexion with the Divine Presence, and in the radiant beams of his glorious light.

We are thus again conducted to the seat of the paradisiacal Cherubim, where, although we find, in the brief text which contains the scriptural account, no express mention of sacrifice or of the Incarnation, a careful and sober examination will, it is believed, lead to a strong presumption, if not to a

more absurd to human reason than animal sacrifice, as an expiation for sin. Nor is it possible to assign any adequate cause for its institution as a sacred rite, regarded as a mere invention of man. Yet it is certain that it was introduced into the first family of mankind soon after the fall. This rite was, in the case of the immediate children of the first pair, made the test of their religious character, and, in respect of at least one of them, became the means whereby faith unto salvation was exercised. This rite was also taken, as an existing religious institution, and not as a new command, into the Mosaic economy, and recognised therein as a great standing type of the death of Christ. From these premisses the conclusion is almost irresistible, and is, in fact, generally admitted, that the institution of animal piacular sacrifice could not have originated in the wayward, unguided mind and will of Adam or of his sons, but must have been appointed immediately by Divine teaching and commandment. This must not be regarded as a doubtful conclusion, deduced just now in support of the views which I advocate respecting cherubic symbolism. It is, on the contrary, rather an established induction, maintained by the most eminent biblical and theological writers, which has been deduced and defended by investigation and reasoning entirely independent of the object of my present inquiry.

A very few brief extracts will justify this ob-

was the faith in which it was offered. Scripture assigns no other object of this faith, but the promise of a Redeemer: and of this faith the offering of an animal in sacrifice appears to have been the legitimate, and consequently the instituted, expression. The institution of animal sacrifice, then, was co-eval with the fall, and had a reference to the sacrifice of our redemption.”*

Mr. Faber, who has most ably supported the views expressed by archbishop Magee, may be referred to as a high authority on this point. His remarks scarcely admit of such a selection as fully to express the point of his argument: it will be sufficient, however, to cite his conclusion, recommending the reader to consult the author's reasons at large. He says, “The rite of piacular oblation *must* have been *divinely* instituted at the very commencement of the patriarchal dispensation.”† Again: “The very rejection of the other sacrifice (Cain's) clearly imports a *previous revelation*: for unless Cain had already *known* that God had instituted the rite of piacular sacrifice for the express purpose of making an atonement, he could not have sinned in bringing an eucharistic vegetable oblation rather than an expiatory animal sin-offering.

“Hence the rite must have been divinely appointed, not merely when the sacrifices of Cain and

I quote to the same purpose from another author :
 “The doctrines essential to salvation must have been preached to Adam, or he could not have believed in them ; and without a belief in them he could not have been saved. The conclusion is just, and the consequence necessary : and if these had been withholden at any period, it would have been a fact quite irreconcilable with the proceedings of the Divine government, as revealed to us ; or the declaration of the Almighty, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God.’ This conclusion therefore necessarily remains, that all the knowledge essential to produce that faith, without which we cannot experience a death unto sin, was promulgated to our first parents, the very day of their offence. The principles which operated under the former covenant, had become weak and insufficient, by reason of transgression. To substitute new ones, suited to relieve and recover the sinner, was in the contemplation of Divine Mercy. The concealment of this gracious intention could only take place in opposition to the principles of it, and, of course, to the exercise of those attributes displayed in the revelation of it ; an act quite at variance with the inspired declaration, that ‘he left not himself without witness ;’ for, until this was made known, no witness of His grace and mercy could exist.”*

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 Whoee carefully considers the whole subject, will I doubt not see the propriety of embracing

nent writer, that "it is very probable, that sacrifice was instituted immediately after God had revealed the covenant of grace, by means of the promised 'seed of the woman,' in his denunciation to the serpent. (Gen. iii. 15.) That promise was the first stone that was laid toward the erection of this glorious building, the work of redemption through JESUS CHRIST, the 'chief corner-stone,' to crown and complete the whole at the consummation of all things. (Eph. ii. 20.) And the next stone that was laid upon that, was the institution of *sacrifice*, to be a type or significant emblem of the great atonement, or all-sufficient sacrifice, of 'the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the' repentant and believing 'world,' (John i. 29,) thus 'slain for us from the foundation of the world.' (Rev. xiii. 8.)"*

If, then, the rational induction, that sacrifice was divinely instituted immediately after the fall, is admitted, we are led to inquire where, and under what circumstances, that important rite would be performed. That there was a stated and appointed place for the purpose, seems certain: for neither Cain nor Abel presented their oblations where they found them, but "brought" them "unto the Lord." (Gen. iv. 3, 4.) This place, or some memorial located there, was called "the face," or "the presence, of the Lord." From this sacred spot Cain was

rubim" were placed before Paradise for a purpose similar to that for which they were appointed in the Hebrew sanctuary,—to afford a divinely-instituted place, by which a way of access might be opened up unto God, through a sacrifice of blood? The tree of life in the garden could only have been typical of the real "tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" in heaven. (Rev. ii. 7.) It was utterly impossible that access to any tree in the terrestrial garden could have conferred immortality, or any other benefit, on Adam in opposition to the will of God. It should, therefore, be deemed most unreasonable and unworthy to wrest the terms of the original scriptures, and to force upon them the idea of a celestial guard of at least two angels, with one fiery sword, at the east of Eden, to prevent one terror-stricken man, with his helpless wife, from having access to a tree, which grew in the midst of the garden.

But if the Cherubim were placed there, as they afterward were in the Hebrew sanctuary, in connexion with a revelation of the Divine Presence, and a command to offer sacrifices of blood, as typical of the great and promised Atonement; then we have in this text a fact worthy of being recorded on the sacred page,—a fact which casts much light upon the religious history of the first inhabitants of our world, and which at the same time harmonizes with the general economy of grace. Taking this view of the text, we see one type substituted for another

sacramental emblem, of heavenly joy ; and eating of this, while basking in the sunlight of the Divine favour, the happy pair might feel that, even in the garden of delights, they were in the way to a more glorious life, preparing to partake of the fruit of a more heavenly tree. Sin destroyed all this joy, and peace, and hope ; sin prevented the possibility of the fruit continuing any longer to serve this purpose. With the fearful change which had been wrought in the moral character and moral circumstances of man, a change of the way of access unto God, and consequently of the type, became necessary. This change was made. The Cherubim, with the Divine Presence, appeared. The promise of a Redeemer, which had been already given, was now explained and applied by the institution of piacular sacrifice : and thus the Cherubim and the infolding fire preserved unto guilty man the way of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

Although fully satisfied as to the substantial accuracy of this exposition, I am far from believing that it will obtain universal acceptance. Many are so attached to notions which are popular, and which have been long and generally entertained, that they are indisposed to the careful investigation, and the laborious exercise of research and judgment, necessary to the attainment of more enlarged and just views even on important subjects. And those who are so disposed may probably require

essay have enabled me to make. But, however this may be, it may be safely asserted that the opinions which I have propounded respecting the appointment and object of the paradisiacal Cherubim have been maintained by the most eminent scholars, and are supported by Hebrew expositors of holy scripture, as well as by the general testimony of the religious history of the world in its earliest ages. As the point is one of peculiar interest and importance generally, as well as in its bearing upon the subject of this inquiry, I shall add to what has been previously advanced the following corroborative evidence.

Parkhurst, the Hebrew lexicographer, in a note on the word יִשְׁכֵּן (*ishāh-can*), says, “The word here expresses that there was a tabernacle (resembling, doubtless, the Mosaic) in which the Cherubim and emblematic fire and glory were placed from the fall.” Whatever scepticism may oppose to the reception of such an opinion, it is an undoubted fact, that the patriarchs had a sacred place where the Divine Presence was believed to reside, and where they had access unto God. One clear proof is sufficient; and this we have in the case of Rebekah. In her distress “she went to inquire of the Lord.” (Gen. xxv. 22.) The circumstance is mentioned as if it had been by no means unusual: and it was undoubtedly a successful application; for “the Lord” graciously responded to her prayer, and predictively declared the destiny of her children

sequently with the subject of our inquiry, by the fact, that before the Israelites reached Sinai, and therefore before the ark and tabernacle had been constructed according to the directions which Moses had received in the mount, there was a tabernacle in the camp of Israel sacred to the Lord, in which he appeared, and conversed with his chosen servant. (Exod. xxxiii. 7—9; see also Exod. xvi. 33; and 2 Sam. vii. 6.) This must, therefore, have been a patriarchal institute.

But the most important element in this argument is the fact, that the opinions of eminent members of the Hebrew church on this subject appear to have been in perfect harmony with the conclusions to which I have been conducted. The author of an apocryphal book written certainly before the Christian era, personating Solomon when about to build the temple, says, "Thou hast commanded me to build a temple upon thy holy mount, and an altar in the city wherein thou dwellest, *a resemblance of the holy tabernacle which thou hast prepared from the beginning.*" (Wisdom of Solomon, ix. 8.) The Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the text under consideration (Gen. iii. 24) enunciates the same idea: "And he drove and thrust out the man; from which time he caused the glory of his presence to dwell of old between the *two Cherubim.*" The Targum of Jerusalem is to the same effect:

the best information respecting the doctrinal views of the Hebrew people, clearly maintain the establishment of the Divine Presence in connexion with the paradisiacal Cherubim.

If the limits of this essay would allow an investigation into the religious history of ancient Gentile nations, further corroboration of the doctrines which have been advanced would be made available. On this head, however, I confine myself to the remark, that small shrines, as similar as possible to the Hebrew ark, are frequently found in connexion with the sacred rites of the ancient Egyptians; and that figures bearing more or less resemblance to the cherubic form are discovered in association with the religious imagery and sculpture of every ancient nation; demonstrating that while the sacred things pertaining to the patriarchal faith were introduced into the Mosaic ritual with a more defined typical meaning, and with more systematic connexion and religious effect, the Gentiles retained them, but perverted them to idolatrous purposes; and proving the existence of these sacred emblems prior to the giving of the law, and therefore from the beginning. For, if they were not instituted prior to the law, no circumstances can reasonably account for their introduction, but those which occurred in immediate connexion with the fall.

scripture history, the opinions of the ancient Hebrews, and the religious rites of ancient nations, no reasonable doubt will, it is believed, remain, that the passage speaks of a seat of the Divine Presence, and of cherubic emblems very similar to what were afterward found in the sanctuary, and therefore in all probability connected with animal sacrifice.

It may be desirable here to place before the reader the results which have attended the prosecution of the inquiry thus far.

1. It has been shown that no substantial reason has been given for believing that the Cherubim were intended to symbolize the Persons of the Trinity, or Divine Powers; or that the word designates an order of angels, and that the cherubic figures were emblems of angel nature and office: but that the arguments which have been used to support either of these opinions, are inconclusive and unsatisfactory.

2. A separate examination of all the texts bearing upon this subject has led to the conclusion, that they possess, notwithstanding considerable diversity of expression and peculiarity of immediate purpose and design, a homogeneous character, and exhibit the same symbolic meaning.

3. It has been seen that the Cherubim are every where identified with a revelation of the Divine Presence, and associated with the doctrine of the Incarnation and the rite of expiatory sacrifice.

the important question of the symbolic character and design of the Cherubim. The concurrent testimony of every class of evidence has led me to the conclusion, that these figures, from first to last, were intended to symbolize, and set forth visibly, the faithful recipients of the great Atonement, or, in other words, the united body of those who, in all ages and countries of the world, and under every dispensation of the truth, have believed in the appointed Redeemer to the saving of the soul.

However numerous or weighty the objections which may be raised to oppose the reception of this conclusion, it will be allowed to possess one advantage:—its decidedly religious character will afford an efficient means of testing its soundness and truth. It would be extraordinary indeed, if, applying this key to the solution of the several obscure passages bearing upon the subject, no satisfactory decision as to its truth or fallacy were arrived at. Let this reasonable test be applied: Hitherto these texts have been reviewed for purposes preparatory to this: let it now be tried, whether the general principle, that the Cherubim symbolize the whole body of the believing church, will afford a sense to the several portions of holy writ which refer to the subject, more consistent, satisfactory, and in harmony with the general scope of revealed truth, than those which refer them to Divinity or angel nature

In doing this, it may not be undesirable to pay passing attention to the term by which they are designated, ζῶα. It will be necessary to observe here, that in the New-Testament scriptures four different Greek words are rendered in our version by the term "life:"—1. Βίος. (Mark xii. 44; Luke viii. 14, 43; 1 Tim. ii. 2, &c.) This term signifies "the course of life, manner of life, means of livelihood," &c. 2. Πνεῦμα, which means "wind, air, the air we breathe, the breath of life," &c. It is used in the New Testament, in conjunction with the epithet "the Holy," to designate the person and operations of the Holy Ghost. Combined with various adjectives, it refers to wicked demons; and at other times denotes "the mind" or "soul" of man. It is generally in our version rendered "spirit." 3. Ψυχή, which signifies "the life, animal life, a living animal, the human soul." The last is its dominant acceptation in the New Testament: when bearing another sense, it is generally rendered "life." 4. Ζῶον, which means "alive, living." This is the term used to designate the living creatures of the Apocalypse. It is applied to God both by Plato and Aristotle in precisely the same form (ζῶον) as that which St. John employs to designate the cherubic emblems. As one of our Greek Lexicographers observes, "Ζῶον is any thing which has life, and in its highest signification may be applied

This expression is made use of in the New Testament, to denote the spiritual life which is derived from Christ by faith as the portion of believers, both in this world and in that which is to come. In more than one hundred and forty passages in which the word occurs in the New Testament, it refers to the inferior creatures but three or four times, and to the animal life of man but five or six: in every other case, it designates the spiritual or immortal life of the believer. If, therefore, the living creatures had been intended to symbolize the church of God, this is the term which would in all probability be applied to such living symbols: while, if angels had to be represented, it seems more likely that another name would have been used. This term, being the usual exponent of spiritual life, most suitably expresses the emblems of the whole body of believers.

But respecting the application of the proposed principle to this passage little need be said. It is certain that these living creatures are not emblematical of Deity, or of Divine Powers: it is equally certain that they are not representatives of angels. They say,—it is indeed the burden of their song,—that they are “REDEEMED” unto God by the blood of the Lamb “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” (Rev. v. 9.) If we examine this language of the apostle, free from the bias of favourite theories it can scarcely be mis-

harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints." (Verse 8.) Those who maintain that the Cherubim symbolize angels, are here brought into contact with the popish doctrine of angelic mediation. If the living creatures are emblematic of angel ministration, then we are taught that angel powers present the prayers of the saints unto God: a doctrine discountenanced by the whole tenor of revealed truth. Those who make the word of God the sole guide of their faith, will, I think, prefer adhering to the plain sense of the apostle's explicit declaration, namely, that they are the "redeemed," or rather, living emblems of a living church. This circumstance explains their holding the harps and vials. As representatives of the whole body of believers, they hymn the high praises of God for his love and mercy, and present to him the united supplications of the faithful.

A further proof that the apostle, while describing the Divine throne, had the Jewish sanctuary in his mind, and adapted his language to the description of its sacred things, is found in another text, Rev. vii. 15, which in our version reads, "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." But the last clause of this passage should be rendered, "Shall dwell as in a tabernacle above them."* On this citation a learned living author remarks. "The lan-

cer, is palpably borrowed from the manifestation of Jehovah in the Levitical tabernacle above the Cherubim: and elsewhere in the Revelation, we find the very same place before God's throne ascribed to the cherubic animals upon the ark, which is here ascribed to the saints. It appears, therefore, that the saints and the Cherubim occupy one situation in the heavenly vision, and that the Lord is indifferently said to tabernacle above each of them. Whence the plain inference is,—agreeably to the acknowledgment of the cherubic symbols, that they are redeemed out of all nations by the blood of the Lamb,—the plain inference is, that the Cherubim are to be viewed as hieroglyphics of the whole body of the faithful, secure within the ark of the church.”*

The testimony, therefore, which the New Testament bears on this subject, is clear and unequivocal. It asserts, that the living Cherubim are identical with the redeemed of every nation and people; and each circumstance connected with these glorious visions, and all the collateral evidence on the point, explain and confirm the verbal assertion. Nor can this testimony be legitimately confined to the scenery of the apostolic vision. Like the sunlight of noon, it illuminates objects but dimly seen in the dawning twilight of revelation, and fully makes known the nature and character of cherubic symbolism in all ages of the church.

application of our proposed solution to those passages of scripture which have been referred to, in which the Lord is invoked as inhabiting the Cherubim, or, according to the rendering of the authorized translation, "dwelling between the Cherubim." This language, be it observed, must not be dealt with as if it had been unmeaning adulation, offered by a courtier to a sovereign. It is the serious and solemn expression of pious feeling and godly sentiment, emanating from those who lived under the glorious influence and spoke under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The terms must therefore be taken in their direct meaning: and as the speakers drew spiritual life, and confidence, and hope, from these aspirations to God, we may fairly believe them to be pointedly applicable to the real nature of the Divine inhabitation of the sacred symbols, and therefore significant of the character of their symbolism. Certainly those who used this language could not have believed the Cherubim to be emblematical of Deity or of Divine Powers: they would not speak of the Deity as dwelling in himself! Nor is it easy to believe, that they could have had any reference to angelic symbolism: for, throughout the whole range of holy scripture, no allusion is found to any such connexion subsisting between the Deity and angelic nature; nor, if the thing had

it afford? But if the instruction of the Holy Spirit imparted to these men, whose ardent piety carried them even in advance of their dispensation, an understanding of the true character of spiritual blessing in the influence of the Holy Ghost; and if this teaching gave them any clear apprehension of the real nature of these cherubic emblems, as representing the faithful, and showing forth their peculiar union and intercourse with God; then how full of force and beauty will these words appear! If the inspired Psalmist in his supplications, (Psalm lxxx.,) and the king of Israel in his trouble, (Isai. xxxvii. 16,) were thus spiritually instructed,—and I confess I see no reason to doubt the fact,—then what consolation would these views of this spiritual union with Deity minister to them in their painful religious exercises! Then the poet might indeed say, “Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved:” (Psalm lxxx. 19:) language, be it observed, which decidedly confirms our view of cherubic symbolism, as it seems to identify the Psalmist pouring out his soul to God on behalf of his afflicted and prostrate church, with the cherubic figures; and to express the prayer that, as the Divine Light shone upon the symbols, so the Divine Mercy might shine forth upon the body which they represented.

representation of the faithful before the throne of God on high, in the remarkable language of St. Paul?—"But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, *to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven,* and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." (Heb. xii. 22, 23.) The term rendered "written," (*ἀπογεγραμμένων*), means "enrolled, registered:" and as it must not be literally understood here, but figuratively; for this reason, and because the same persons are afterward specifically mentioned under the title of "just men made perfect," these words cannot apply to those individual members of the church who have finished their course, and obtained their crown: it becomes probable, therefore, that the apostle, having previously spoken at length of the typical elements of the Mosaic dispensation, had them in his mind, as representing the great body of believers. This is rendered more likely, as he adopts precisely the same arrangement as that used by St. John in the apocalyptic vision,—the angels, the representatives of the whole church, the throne. I feel disposed to believe, that he alludes to the same symbolic representation.

But, however this may be, this manner of invoking or speaking of Deity, as dwelling in or inhabiting

ment nothing but a splendid machinery, by which certain orders of men are called, by the use of external rites to work out specified results, may see no beauty or appropriateness in this language. But the men who recognise the spiritual influence and experimental power of the gospel, will perceive its point, and admire the striking exhibition which it affords of the master-privilege of redemption,—communion with God. To these it will display in type the conscious union which exists between believers and their Divine Head, and the ground of their confidence in Him who is their life, and by whom they are knit together in one body, and made partakers of Him who filleth all in all. May the blessing of Him who inhabiteth the Cherubim rest upon his church!

I have now to apply my exposition of cherubic symbolism to the vision of Ezekiel: and although the same weighty reasons are found here for rejecting the notion that they were intended to exhibit any representation of Divinity, it has nevertheless been to a wide extent believed, that this portion of scripture contains rather strong evidence in favour of the doctrine of the angelic symbolism. But if, passing beyond vague and general notions, we proceed to serious investigation and rational inquiry, and thus test this hypothesis, what single element can be found, throughout the whole of Ezekiel's visions, which gives it any support? It is true the

be sufficient to establish the notion that the living creatures are therefore emblematic of angels, the course of reasoning is soon finished. But these adjuncts cannot sustain such an argument. The Cherubim are admitted on all hands to have been symbols or emblems: their life, motion, form, therefore, no more prove them to be emblematic of angels than of human beings. The exercise of a little reflection will show the probability to be decidedly in favour of the latter hypothesis. It is a fact worthy of serious consideration, that the scriptures never give us an undoubted animal emblem of angelic nature, nor afford a single instance in which holy angels are represented by animal or compounded forms. But that which never happens in the case of these celestial beings, is of frequent occurrence with respect to men in the pages of holy writ, concerning whom all kinds of emblematic representation and symbolism are found to obtain. For instance, successive monarchies are represented respectively by the head, by the breast and arms, by the belly and thighs, by the legs and feet, of a metallic image. One nation is symbolized by a ram, another by a he-goat. And when real animals do not present an adequate supply of significant emblems to meet the requirement of the intended symbolism, combinations and ideal figures are called in and employed.

having eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things. (Dan. vii. 4—8.) All these are scripture symbols of human beings in their several political, martial, and ecclesiastical combinations. When, therefore, compounded or ideal animal forms are presented to our view, in a sense evidently symbolical, if we allow our judgment to be guided by the general teaching of holy scripture, we shall be led to seek the representatives of these emblems, not in celestial orders,—of whose condition our knowledge is very slight, and whose interest in the scheme of revealed truth is at least impersonal and indirect,—but rather in the circumstances and combinations of those for whose benefit the system of redemption was devised and accomplished. It is a fact which ought not to be overlooked in the consideration of this subject, that the apostate anti-Christian church is in the Apocalypse represented by “a beast with ten horns;” which is, in fact, a symbolism precisely parallel to that of the Cherubim, the form only being changed, to meet the alteration in the character intended to be represented.

There is, therefore, no rational objection to the opinion, that the cherubic figures of Ezekiel’s vision were appointed to symbolize the body of the faithful. I will now proceed to show that there are cogent reasons in favour of believing that this was their in-

their living wheels, although animate in the highest sense, are described as fully influenced by, and perfectly obedient to, another more elevated and directing Spirit. "Whither the Spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went." (Ezek. i. 12.) "Whithersoever the Spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels." (Verses 20, 21.) I am aware that some clauses of this scripture are obscure, and are found in a somewhat different form in ancient mss.: but I think it will not be denied that the general sense of the whole clearly indicates the perfect and unlimited manner in which the living creatures and their wheels, their motions and their ways, were governed and influenced by a directing and pervading Spirit. A learned commentator observes on the first clause, "Whither the Spirit was to go, they went,"—"Without any dispute or delay. The Spirit of God directed all their motions: and all their ministrations were truly unconstrained and free, as they were subservient to God's designs."* I ask confidently, Where, within the range of human know-

church of God? Angels, as I have repeatedly observed, render obedience to God from a native purity of mind, and delight to do his will; the church, through the living influence of a pervading and indwelling Spirit.

2. But then these living creatures not only exactly represent the real nature of the church, and show the true principle of its action and obedience: they appear in a connexion which none but symbols of the church could properly occupy. The great occasion of this vision stood closely conjoined with the judgment of Jerusalem, and the abandonment of the temple by the Divine Presence: but the direction and accomplishment of these measures are not placed before us simply as revelations of the justice and power of God, but rather as a grand development of the purposes of his grace. It is true, the throne of God, invested and crowned with the glory of God, appears; but there is upon the throne "the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it;" (Ezek. i. 26;) and this is surrounded with the token of the covenant,—the glorious bow. When we see the throne of an incarnate God set up on the earth, exalted above, and placed among, living agents, who are fully imbued with, and obedient to, a pervading and directing Spirit; when this throne receives the glorious Divine Presence which forsakes an apostate church, and, destroying those whose measure of iniquity is full, marks and saves the faithful rem-

church of God? Here is an unquestionable revelation of the incarnate King: who are the members of his kingdom? Here is the everlasting throne of David: who are the spiritual Israel? Not angels, but blood-washed men, saved through faith in the great Atonement.

This view of these glorious scenes not only offers a rational exposition of cherubic symbolism in this particular instance, but makes the whole of the august revelation harmonize with the grand designs of God in the redemption of the world; displays the triumph of his united wisdom, righteousness, and purity; and gives a standing pledge that his purposes of grace shall be fully accomplished.

The vision of Isaiah presents another opportunity of applying this exposition of cherubic symbolism. It has been already shown that the glorious Seraphim here described stood in the most holy place, where the propitiatory appeared raised to a great height, and invested with glory, as a Divine throne. Here the living creatures incessantly praise God, crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isai. vi. 3.) This, as the learned Dr. Hales observes, is a proof that they did not symbolize Deity; for, as he pertinently asks, "why should the Deity praise himself?"* It has, however, been regarded by many

symbolized the great body of believers, is the only one which offers a consistent explication of this noble scripture.

I accept the application of my theory, therefore, to the exposition of this portion of holy writ, as a special test of its soundness and truth. I maintain that the Seraphim could not have been intended to symbolize angels, not only because they occupy a position, and sustain a character and office, elsewhere specially assigned to the redeemed, but principally because they are engaged in a work never performed by angels. These celestial beings are, indeed, "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. i. 14.) Special instances of their agency and interposition are upon record; and it is probable that in this world we shall never fully estimate all we owe to their guardian care. But, as far as we are informed by the inspired text, their good offices are confined to providential interposition. I think I am safe in asserting, that the scriptures contain no account of a single instance in which any of the celestial host are employed as instruments in the communication of grace to the heart of man.* This

* The case of the angel described in the Apocalypse as flying "in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach." (Rev. xiv. 6.) cannot be drawn into opposition to

is the vocation of the church of God. "Unto you," men, partakers of the guilt of sin, and of pardoning grace through the Atonement, "is the word of this salvation sent." (Acts xiii. 26.) "WE," and not angels, "are ambassadors for Christ." (2 Cor. v. 20.) The disciples, and not a celestial agency, are "the salt of the earth," "the light of the world." (Matt. v. 13, 14.) This important truth forms a key to open the symbolism of this prophetic vision. The overpowering sight of the Divine Glory, and sense of the Divine Purity, prostrated the favoured man, and wrought in him a deep feeling of his personal guilt and impurity, under the influence of which he cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then," he adds, "flew one of the Seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." (Isai. vi. 5—7.)

This, I am bold to say, stands out as an unqualified exception to all the angelic agency described in the Bible, and clearly shows that the Seraphim could not have been intended to symbolize angels.

of Christians, whose professed object is to send the gospel of the kingdom throughout the earth: we know not. But the

The idea that this act of instrumentally purging away sin was done by a symbol of angelic power, is sustained by no doctrinal teaching, or practical example, throughout the entire range of sacred history. But while this action throws insuperable difficulty in the way of the popular theory, it offers a strong confirmation of the exposition advocated in the preceding pages, and, upon that principle, affords a satisfactory solution to the symbolism of the vision. If the Seraphim be emblems of the living church, what more appropriate agency could apply the fire from the altar to the cleansing of moral impurity? In this light, the vision appears to accord with the entire scheme of redemption, and offers a beautiful illustration of important scriptural teaching. The glory of God revealed in his church, and his purity and truth proclaimed by his church, affect a guilty sinner; and he is awakened, convinced, and penitent. The church, pursuing her vocation, places the contrite mourner in contact with the great Atonement, and the "iniquity is taken away and the sin purged." The application of this principle of interpretation, therefore, in this instance also, however it may interfere with the poetic conceptions of some persons, supplies a rational and straightforward explanation of the whole matter.

No lengthened observations will be necessary in applying the exposition of the symbolism which I have adopted to the case of the Cherubim in the

that we should here find any opportunity for particular elucidation. In these cases we have to do with pure types, and consequently do not possess the means of evangelical illustration and exposition which the inspired commentaries of the prophets afford. In forming an opinion of the symbolic character of these figures, by comparing their position and circumstances with the several proposed modes of solution, we have rather to exercise a judgment enlightened by a general acquaintance with holy scripture, and a reason subjected to, and guided by, the great principles of evangelical godliness, than to yield conviction to any dazzling or demonstrative proof. Here we meet with elements, divinely designed to shadow out spiritual truth, "good things to come;" (Heb. x. 1;) and, in attempting to discover their meaning, we must be satisfied with a rational induction.

In the sanctuary, then, we find the law and the ark of the covenant: may we not expect to find some symbol of those to whom this law was given, with whom this covenant was made? In this sacred spot there is the propitiatory, where the blood of sacrifice made atonement, and where, as typical of the Redeemer's death, it was received as the procuring cause of mercy: is it, then, unreasonable to look for some representatives of those for whom this atonement was made, and who derived their life from the application of this mercy? In this holy

might we not anticipate here some emblem of those who thus pray, and whose peculiarity of life arises out of this prayer? The most holy oracle contained a visible display of the Divine Glory, shining forth in unclouded brightness, over the mercy-seat: might we not then expect to discover, too, some figure of those on whom the light of the Divine Countenance really rests, through the prevalence of the Great Atonement?

The inner sanctuary shadowed forth not only the means, but the end, of the great scheme of redemption. It was a type of heaven, where the Saviour reigns, and where the results of his passion are realized. It seems reasonable, therefore, that in this compendium of all type and emblem, there should be some figurative exhibition of the redeemed, the saved, in their purchased rest and glory. All this to my mind appears perfectly rational: and hence I conclude, that the cherubic emblems were intended to symbolize the living church. Others may think differently; they may regard it as more probable, that figures should be introduced representing the presence of angels as adoring spectators, while every reference to the redeemed is excluded. With regard to such objectors, however, I can only say, that this part of the subject does not seem capable of affording any

view which I have taken, and which is not founded on imaginative inference, but on scriptural fact. The Hebrews were taught by the whole tenor of their ritual service, that they owed their religious life to the blood of atonement; in strict accordance thereto, the Cherubim arose out of the propitiatory, being of the same material and substance with it. Explicit scriptures teach us, that representatives of the redeemed are found in heavenly glory, on the throne of grace and around the throne. This was precisely the position occupied by the cherubic figures in that type of heaven, the most holy place. The highest hope of the pious Hebrew was to enjoy the presence of God in a heavenly city; his most elevated desire on earth, to witness the outbeamings of his glorious presence. Hence the ardent and oft-repeated prayer, "Shine forth." This glory always shone around the Cherubim; they always stood in the bright light of the Shekinah. Where do type and antitype more fully agree? What discordant element is developed by the application of this interpretation?

The most interesting and important test of any mode of cherubic interpretation is that which applies it to the passage in Genesis which has been so frequently referred to, and where the term first occurs. (Gen. iii. 24.) The point at issue between the common notion of this text, and the meaning which my principle of cherubic symbolism would put upon it

neous translation, is practically corrected by other cognate texts, or by passages in other parts of holy scripture which bear upon the same subject. In this case no such aid is available: the text stands almost alone as a key to the religious knowledge and privilege of the early ages. If the reading of the authorized version be adhered to in its ordinary sense, as teaching that an angel-guard was placed before Eden with a flaming sword to prevent Adam and his wife from returning to the garden, and we are called upon to receive this exposition, it is surely permissible to note the consequences which such an interpretation involves. If this version in its common acceptation be received, then we believe that Moses, when giving the church in all ages an epitome (a very brief and condensed epitome, it is admitted) of the history and religion of patriarchal times, omits all reference to any institution for worship,—any means by which man could have access unto God,—all verbal or symbolical information as to his religious condition, and duty, and privilege,—beyond the terms of the primitive promise given to Eve in the garden. Is this probable?

If that view be the correct one, then we are bound to regard the first pair and their children as called to live, and to learn to approach God by faith in his promise, with a certain knowledge that all the visible Divine interposition which the world con-

then it must be supposed that the first Divine revelation of a permanent character made to sinful man, whom it was the Divine purpose to save, and to whom a Redeemer had been already promised, was misleading in its influence, and calculated to give a false view of the Divine attributes and character. For nothing of this kind occurs again throughout the whole of scripture history. This method of viewing the subject gives an unworthy idea of the power of God, and exhibits a display of terrible provision far beyond the requirements of the case. Adam and his wife, while unconvicted and uncondemned, were so conscience-stricken when "they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden," that they shrank into secrecy, and "hid themselves amongst the trees:" (Gen. iii. 8:) and yet we are taught to believe that when this pair were arraigned, judged, expelled, and driven forth to cultivate the soil of the open country, it was necessary to appoint a guard of angels, and a sword of fire, to prevent them from forcing a return to the prohibited spot!

If the ordinary interpretation be really the true one, the first inhabitants of the world were called to obtain salvation by faith in a Divine promise, with no visible revelation to give it effect or support; while the word of judgment and threatening was shown to be so powerless, that it had to be sustained by a supernatural appearance, and enforced by a celestial

angels by the simple term מלאך (*mal-āhch*), “messengers,” by which he designates indiscriminately the men whom he sent to the king of Moab, and the celestial ministers that appeared to the patriarchs; yet here he applies a name to angels which, in every other portion of his writings, is applied to metallic figures; and that, although Moses every where else speaks of angels as employed in missions of benevolence, yet in this solitary case they are supposed to be ministers of wrath. God himself destroyed Sodom: the angels saved Lot.

It is not too much to say, that, whatever objection may lie against the views advocated in these pages, they are free, even here, from such serious difficulties as these. Applied to this obscure passage, they harmonize the Divine procedure in this instance with the general economy of grace, and make the appointment of the paradisiacal Cherubim the most important religious institution of the patriarchal age.

If I am correct in believing that the Cherubim and the infolding fire were appointed before Eden to give fallen man a new way of access to a visible revelation of the Divine Presence through the blood of animal sacrifice, as being typical of the atonement of the great Redeemer; then the text not only fills up a gloomy hiatus in the religious history of man, but affords the most important information as to the

verbal criticism, and taking the words as they occur, it would be unreasonable to force on them a meaning at variance with the usual manner of the writer, and altogether unsuitable to the persons for whose immediate benefit he wrote. There were in the theology of that day no terms by which different orders of celestial beings were specifically designated. The word "Cherubim," therefore, used as applying to an order of angels, would, to the Hebrews in the time of Moses, be as unmeaning as its use for the first time with the definite article before it, in that sense, would have been incorrect. But all the Hebrews of that day knew the Cherubim of the sanctuary, and that they were essentially connected with the propitiatory, identified with the seat of the Divine Presence ; and that they marked out the place where, in a very special manner, atonement was made for sin by the blood of sacrifice. When, in such circumstances, the inspired writer informs us that "THE Cherubim," and the fire, were placed before Paradise, it is but reasonable to take the terms in accordance with the object of the writer, and the case of the people ; as stating a fact in harmony with all their ideas of worship and of sacrifice, by pointing out the origin of institutions which had been incorporated into their religious system, and had been made the basis of their eccle-

tion to this text casts important light upon the whole of the early religious history of mankind. The origin of sacrifice, the mode by which the promise of redemption was kept before the public mind, the ordinances of patriarchal religion, the outward means by which the faith of the pious was in the early ages cultivated and sustained,—are all very clearly exhibited, and more or less illustrated, by the interpretation of cherubic symbolism which I have endeavoured to recommend.

I have thus applied the principle of exposition that the Cherubim were divinely-appointed symbols of the believing church, to every portion of holy writ bearing upon the subject ; and have found it to accord with the sense of each and of all, notwithstanding their difference of time, circumstances, and authorship ; and to afford a consistent and rational explanation of this interesting and important symbolism in all the range of its occurrence from the Book of Genesis to that of Revelation.

In concluding this brief essay, I will not speculate upon the extent to which I have succeeded in securing the assent of the reader to my views : but honestly believing the statement made at the outset, that the principle which I have advocated is perfectly sound ; and that if the evidence has not been placed in a convincing form, the cause must be, not in the doctrine advocated, but in the want of talent,

the way in which it has been exhibited and maintained, but because of its intrinsic excellence. I may be permitted to close this investigation with a few general observations.

Here, in the first place, I feel called upon to notice an objection, which is sure to suggest itself to the serious and discerning reader. "What is the reason," it will be asked, "that such confusion and difference of opinion should have gathered about such an important biblical subject? And to what cause must we attribute such general misapprehension respecting a matter so unconnected with doctrinal or sectarian controversy?" These inquiries are so reasonable, that they claim a passing notice; while, if pursued at length, they would lead to a very extended investigation. All the scope that my limits allow me on this point will be, to glance at the cause of this obscurity, notice the consequent confusion of opinion which obtained respecting the subject at a very early period in the Christian church, and show that, instead of militating against my argument, these circumstances support it.

Although we are not at liberty to infer that the Hebrew people apprehended to any great extent the true character of all the types, symbols, and figures so numerous found in connexion with their ritual service, it cannot be doubted that the most pious among them did, under the influence of a lofty

probable it became that its real object and design would be generally perceived and maintained. If, then, the solution advocated in this work be the correct one, it is not likely that a people so devoted to external rites as the Hebrews were, would apprehend in the Cherubim a figure of a spiritual and living church, as separate and distinct from the body of outward and nominal professors. On this principle, therefore, it might be expected that the question of cherubic symbolism would pass from the expiring Hebrew church to the rising Christian one, as a question full of doubt and perplexity.

On any other supposition, it seems more probable that the Jewish doctors might have acquired a correct and definite opinion on the subject. If, for instance, the Cherubim had been intended to symbolize angels, the typification was much more likely to be understood, as being a less evangelical exposition, and requiring less of spiritual discernment to apprehend it. Nor, since the ark and the Cherubim had been lost to Israel for five centuries before Christ, is it at all unlikely,—even if the Cherubim were intended to symbolize the body of believers, and had been formerly so recognised,—that many Israelites would overlook this spiritual import, and, being unwilling to appear ignorant of

fesses himself utterly ignorant of the form of the Cherubim, and does not venture an opinion as to their object. Philo regarded them as signifying the two hemispheres; and the flaming sword as delineating the motion of the planets: in which strange opinion he is followed by some modern writers. Irenæus views them as emblematic of several things; such as the four elements, the four quarters of the globe, the four Gospels, the four universal covenants. Tertullian supposes that the cherubic figures, and particularly the flaming sword, denoted the Torrid Zone. Justin Martyr imagines that the living creatures of Ezekiel were symbolical of Nebuchadnezzar in his distress: and Athanasius holds that they were significant of the visible heavens.*

The persuasion which arises in my mind from all this wild speculation and diversity of opinion is, that it makes it the more probable that the true solution is of a simple and spiritual character. If the angelic theory had been correct, it would in those early times, in all probability, have been recognised and taught. The confused state, therefore, in which we find the question in those ancient days, rather confirms, than detracts from, the strength of my position.

Another observation which arises out of the adoption of our solution of this scriptural symbolism is, its effect upon our views of the nature and result

its grand design of enlightening and saving the world. And here I think it must be admitted, that the exposition now advocated is adapted to produce important results. If the opinions propounded in the preceding pages be considered as generally possessing great probability, then we have not only secured a clearer exposition of select portions of holy scripture, removed great difficulties from isolated texts, and placed several expressions, previously obscure, before the mind in a more consistent sense ; but we also gain a better view of the unity and identity of revealed religion in all ages of the world ; and that not merely in its origin, influence, experience, and moral results, but also in the mode of its spiritual revelation and manner of attainment. If these views are correct, Christ not only was the Lamb slain from the creation of the world, but was also, to some extent at least, through this symbolism revealed as such to the faith of the patriarchs. The faith of Abel, Enoch, and Noah stands before us as the direct result which arose out of the religious means with which that age was blessed ;—and the infidelity of Cain, and the conduct of the wicked antediluvians, are equally obvious instances of resistance to Divine teaching and authority. For the patriarchal church, in what is thought

but rather as a Divine and wisely-adapted revision and expansion of the patriarchal faith, by which it became suited to the vocation and circumstances of the elect people of God. Thus, according to the teaching of the apostle, the gospel was preached to Abraham, (Gal. iii. 8,) his predecessors and followers; for he is mentioned as representing those who lived under the primitive dispensation. They in their day had the promise, and the typical sacrifice, and the way of faith. So, also, was the gospel ministered under the Mosaic economy. (Heb. iv. 2.) Notwithstanding the obscurity of types and figures, they too were brought into contact with the Divine reality, an abiding image of which stood in the sanctuary. Occasionally, indeed, through the inspired ministrations of the prophets, these inert emblems would rise, instinct with spirit, into life and motion, and show forth a more vivid representation of the church which they symbolized.

At length the gospel shed its noon-tide splendour over the world; life and immortality were revealed, the Holy Ghost was given; types, figures, emblems, were all swept away, and glorious spiritual life and peace offered to all. Yet with all this magazine of privilege, all this divinely-appointed apparatus of salvation, in our possession, we are living witnesses of the unity of the church in all ages, which I have endeavoured thus rapidly to sketch. Our claim to

glorious veil, we see by faith, as Israel of old saw, the throne, the living Cherubim, the Atonement, the High Priest, the mercy-seat. Yes, and here we meet, as around one common centre, patriarchs, prophets, and all the saints of God.

The reception of this view of cherubic symbolism affords, also, a clearer insight into the true character of the church. I do not here allude to what has been said on the vexed question of the constitution of the church in any controversial spirit. Looking away from all men to the design of God, to his workmanship, his building, I see one common platform out of which the church rises. I do not draw the distinction; it is visible to the eye, unmistakably defined by the Founder of the church. That platform, in all its length and breadth, is *an applied, a realized Atonement*. This is the foundation. And this origin stands immediately beneath the glorious Head: the bright Shekinah is above. A view of the Atonement, a notion of its apprehension, that does not bring us into contact with the glory, is, according to this symbolism, unsound and unsafe. The blood below, the bright shining of the Divine Countenance above,—these, with a third element, genuineness, purity, gold, make a church. No wood, hay, stubble,—nothing that will consume in the

If the basis upon which I am proceeding be sound ; if it be indeed a fact, that the Cherubim symbolized the church ; then it might be fairly presumed that the glorious revelations made to Isaiah and Ezekiel would shed some important light upon this subject. The peculiar circumstances under which these visions were granted to the prophet Ezekiel, invest this expectation with a high degree of probability. At that time the Hebrew people had so fearfully plunged into all the wickedness of idolatry, that they stood on the verge of national ruin. When God came down to judge and punish an apostate people, it was therefore likely, provided any emblems of the church were introduced, that they would be so exhibited as to tend to the correction of prevailing error, and the enforcement of spiritual truth. The vision of Ezekiel seems to have been precisely of this character, and intended to produce these effects. The old Hebrew church had apostatized from God, by maintaining a professed, but superstitious, regard for the worship and temple of God, while they were practising the vilest idolatry. To reprove this conduct, and to unfold the character of his true church and people, the Cherubim, as their symbols, are exhibited alive, influenced and guided by the Spirit of God, and in all their movements acting under his direction. The real principle of their submission to this Divine Power, is shown by the establishment of a throne over and above the Cherubim, on which rested

force of its application. Christ is not only the Head, but also the Sovereign, of his people. His kingly power is displayed through the agency of the Holy Ghost. This Divine Spirit influences the whole body of believers, and becomes their principle of life and source of action, so that "whithersoever the Spirit was to go, they went, thither was their Spirit to go."

As I wish to avoid every approach to a fanciful exposition of holy scripture, I have carefully abstained from giving any opinion as to the import of the various appearances manifested in the Cherubim. Not knowing the design of the several animal forms which are here introduced, I will not speculate upon it. There is, however, one feature in this vision which seems to demand a passing notice. The prophet saw four Cherubim, separate and distinct as living creatures; yet so pervaded and influenced by the Divine Spirit, that they acted in perfect harmony, were always obedient to its influence, always went straight forward, and thus seemed as if but one body. Again, these four living creatures under this influence spread abroad their wings, and joined them together so perfectly above them, as to make one common platform, upon which the throne of God's Messiah was raised, and the glory appeared.

but suggest two thoughts respecting it for the consideration of the reader.

In the development of the scheme of redemption we find what may be called four great divisions or dispensations,—the Patriarchal, the Levitical, the Prophetical, the Christian. All these ministered the gospel in different forms, and were so many means through which the Spirit of God acted upon the world. In gospel times we see the church divided into sections, separated from each other by distinctions of an earthly character, as were the cherubic figures. Looked at from below, they seem to be separate and distinct bodies: viewed from the throne, they appear one, each being joined to the other three, all sustaining the glory, all submitting to the sovereign sway, every one being pervaded by the ruling Spirit. In both aspects the symbol, I think, very strikingly accords with the fact. But I leave these thoughts merely as suggestions for the consideration of the reader. Whether the first or the second view gives the true exposition of the scriptural symbol, or whether it had reference to either, I shall not presume to decide.

Again: this exposition affords some information on the glorious results of genuine religion.

If the Cherubim represent the whole body of believers, they show the character and elevation of each believer. If the whole derive their spiritual

of the accepted sacrifice. So it is in respect of the purity and genuineness of character. The Cherubim were of gold ; every part was of gold. The unalloyed sincerity and freedom from hypocrisy and guile, which this so strikingly indicates, must therefore pertain to the Christian life. It cannot be derived from association, or be realized as the result of combination : it must exist as the common quality of the mass. Whatever, therefore, may be the case with what we call "churches," in their militant and probationary career ; the glorious body figured out by the golden Cherubim, the church approved as such by the great Head, is not corrupted by impurity. Here the symbol presents the body after it has been tried as by fire. Grosser elements do not, in this view, corrupt, alloy, and depreciate the purity of the church : they are removed from it. And, deeply serious as the admonition is, the day is rapidly approaching when all this must be realized.

But it is the glorious elevation to which believers are raised by virtue of this spiritual life, which seems to be most prominently exhibited by these cherubic figures. The great process of redemption is placed before us in its vital operation. All its mysterious elements are displayed,—the broken law, the covenant of mercy, the sacrifice of blood, the incense of prayer, the Divine Presence. Condensed and rendered visible to the eye, yet replete with almighty

man, with all the virtue of his moral nature blasted by sin; his mighty spirit and glorious intellectual powers darkened with error, and corrupted by evil; the poison of death infused even into his animal frame; and the malediction of God resting so fearfully upon him, that he is driven forth from the garden. That seat of earthly verdure and beauty is not to be polluted by his unhallowed tread: even the common soil of the open world is too good for him: "the ground is cursed for" *his* "*sake.*" (Gen. iii. 17.) This splendid specimen of heavenly workmanship in ruin,—this condemned creature breathing a polluted atmosphere, bearing his curse for a brief space over the withering earth, trembling in prospect of a ruin yet more dreadful which yawns before him,—is the subject of this redemption.

We see the symbols here; but what mind can estimate the extent of the symbolism? Who can tell the height of that insult to reason, that outrage on purity, that contempt of Divine authority, which united to break that law? What language can describe the depth of wisdom, height of love, perfection of holiness, which joined to plan that covenant of mercy which the ark of God represented?

But if it is difficult to conceive of the great realities shadowed forth by these types, what shall be said of the antitype of the sacrificial blood? The

stitution ; and a demonstration of the efficacy of this vicarious suffering, by its being accepted instead of the sinner's life, and made the means through which the mercy and blessing of God are richly shed upon him. But the infinite humiliation of Him who descended from the highest seat of heavenly glory, to the lowest walk of human life ; the cup which his soul drank to the dregs, while passing through "the hour and power of darkness ;" the agony which stained the herbage of Gethsemane with blood, extorted from an unwounded body by the anguish of a spirit crushed beneath a world's guilt ; the horrors of Calvary, involving pains, persecutions, torment, and death, such as a world can witness but once ; horrors at which all nature stands appalled, and which clothe earth and heaven with darkness :—All this, although more than created intellect can grasp, or eternity proclaim, is embodied and placed before the mind in the reeking blood sprinkled by the high priest on the golden propitiatory. The censer with the smoking incense is seen, the sweet odours ascending from before the mercy-seat unto the Divine Presence. But can language reach, or conception gauge, the amount of infinitely diversified sorrow and want, wretchedness and anguish, which this symbolizes ? "The prayers of the saints,"

is one figure which in beauty and pathos transcends every other,—which presents to the Christian mind the culminating point of embodied tenderness,—it is this. The wisdom of Heaven was engaged to devise a perceptible image of the prayers of his people ; a condensation of all their confession and supplication, their agony and sorrow, their wants and distress, their fears and griefs, as poured from unnumbered hearts upon the ear of their Heavenly Father : and what is the result? How does Heaven portray this catalogue of enunciated distress? In what form is this endless exuberance of human supplication and sorrow visibly exhibited? Is it as a burden which the Lord is unwilling to bear, an intrusion upon his purity and patience which he desires to throw off? Truly, as high as the heavens are above the earth, so far are his thoughts above our thoughts, and his ways above our ways. (Isai. lv. 9.) This incessant stream of human want assailing Heaven, and supplicating mercy, is by God's appointment described as the fragrance of sweet odours arising from earth to his immediate presence. So glorious in love is our God, that the most desirable, most acceptable, most pleasing emanation which earth sends toward heaven, is the fervent supplications of the people of God. "HEREIN IS LOVE, not that we loved God, but that he loved us." (1 John iv. 10.)

shed light upon human darkness, and given grace and life and blessing to the church in all ages.

All this apparatus of redemption was set forth to the faith of Israel in the most holy place; and serves even now to instruct us by giving an embodiment of all these great elements in actual operation. But it was not for the purpose of exhibiting the means, but of showing the results, that I called the reader's attention to these things.

We see ruined and condemned man—his moral and intellectual being a wreck and an execration—subjected to this process of grace: and what is the issue? Does it save him from his curse, and deliver him from his burden? Can he through these gracious appliances obtain exemption from punishment, and realize peace? All this is done, and infinitely more. Man is raised from all this ruin, saved from all this guilt, delivered from all this death, and raised to an elevation glorious beyond description. He is placed upon the propitiatory, is identified with the seat of the Divine Glory, which radiates about him in ceaseless and boundless floods of peace and joy. He is allied by real brotherhood with Him who sits upon the throne. Even his sufferings and sorrows, want and woe, have entered into the heart of Him who reigns almighty in Zion. No dignity of which men have ever thought or heard equals the dignity of the

the results, of this wondrous redeeming scheme, are the text-book in which the highest angelic natures endeavour to read the brightest attributes of their glorious King.

It is a singular fact, that I can on this point agree with the conclusion to which a German critic has come, although we have taken altogether different views of this subject. Baehr, who, of all recent authors, has given the most correct and profound investigation of the nature of the Cherub, observes, "The Cherub is such a being as, standing upon the highest stage of the creaturely life, and combining in itself the most perfect kinds of creaturely life, is the most complete manifestation of God and of the Divine Life. It is an image of the creature in its highest form." To all this I heartily subscribe. I cannot indeed go on, as he does, to assert that the Cherub is "an ideal creature," combining and individualizing all the powers found in the visible creation. No; this highest, most perfect, most glorious exhibition of creaturely life is displayed in the redeemed raised to glory, and there realizing all the fruits of their Saviour's passion.

Let the mind seriously ponder on the glorious development of God's love to fallen man which these considerations suggest. Let us endeavour to embrace with the heart a rich portion of this un-

I will only add one other observation, which, both as confirmatory of the general argument, and from the character of its subject, will make an appropriate close of the present inquiry. Notwithstanding the limited information directly communicated to the Old-Testament church on the subject of spiritual religion, one fact seems to have been clearly revealed,—namely, that the glory of the Lord should ultimately fill the earth. This is so frequently and so plainly asserted, that it could be scarcely misapprehended. It will not be unimportant to notice the manner in which these predictions were delivered; from which it will be seen that this whole class of texts confirm the view which has been exhibited in the preceding pages, and illustrate some of the observations which have been made.

The term used in these prophecies generally to indicate the grace of God which shall be universally diffused, and in our version rendered “glory,” is the word by which the inspired writers designate that radiance which shone forth from the Divine Presence over the mercy-seat,—precisely the same term as is used in speaking of the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle and the temple. (Exod. xl. 34, 35; 2 Chron. v. 14; vii. 2.) When, therefore, we read, that “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” (Isai.

The manner in which this is done, in some instances, is peculiarly corroborative of this opinion. When, after the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt, fed them with manna, given them his law, and taught and trained them in his truth, and had led them to the borders of the land which he had promised to give them, they evinced their strong practical infidelity by believing, and acting upon, the report of the faithless spies; the Lord, when he doomed that generation to die in the wilderness, made their unfaithfulness the occasion of a most gracious prophecy, for the purpose of asserting the sufficiency of his means to maintain his cause, notwithstanding the wickedness of his people. He therefore declares, "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." (Num. xiv. 21.) Again: when Israel, after having been established in this good land, had forsaken God, and given themselves to idolatry, until hearing they did not understand, and seeing they did not perceive; (Isai. vi. 9;) and it was in consequence decreed in the Divine counsels that the cities should be wasted without inhabitant, and the land made utterly desolate; then again, when the Lord made a glorious revelation to Isaiah, He proclaimed, in the peculiar language of prophecy, while the temple trembled, and the posts of the door moved at his

forth of Him who inhabited the Cherubim; as the splendid effulgence, the bright outbeamings, of that light which shone upon the typical Cherubim, and shall yet more gloriously irradiate the universal church which they symbolized. May the Lord hasten it in his time!

THE END.

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