

in the like sum, to keep the peace for two years. "The Hartford Times," in making some comments upon the remarks of "The Universalist," which justifies the court in the case of Mr. Kneeland, says:

"Paul was a 'pestilent fellow,' in the eyes of some of the ancient authorities, who thought 'a mild enforcement of the laws' necessary. We do not mean to compare Mr. Kneeland with Paul; but to say that error is ready at all times to prop itself with the legal arm. It is not for man to set up a standard of belief for his fellow-man, and to enforce that belief with stripes, dungeon-bolts, or the scaffold itself."

We have previously read the "Investigator," and were not a little surprised at the folly of Mr. Kneeland; indeed, we may say, that we were disgusted with the foul calumny with which he assailed the subject of revealed religion, so much so, that we laid down his paper, and probably for the last time. If the good people of Massachusetts would do the same, none of them would have been troubled with it to this day.—Believing as we do, in the divine authenticity of the bible, and the religion therein revealed, we cannot see where it authorizes the state of Massachusetts to defend it by enacting laws to favor their own particular opinions, and lock up all others, whether they believe or disbelieve it, unless they have a mount Sinai, and lately from its summit have heard the trumpet of the Almighty, declaring his statutes and judgments. We are unacquainted with the constitution of that State; but any law interfering with conscience in the least, is directly opposite to the Constitution of the United States, and is an infringement upon the rights of every citizen over which it claims jurisdiction. If they have a right to lock Mr. Kneeland into jail for his opinion, or even for expressing it, they have an equal right to hang him for the same, as their progenitors did the Quakers. In no instance does man show his weakness sooner, than when he has recourse to the civil law to enforce his opinion; and in no case whatever can he quicker and more effectually show that his system never came from God!

The "Times" says, In the year 1823, the Judges of the Supreme court of the State of Connecticut, declared that Universalism was an immoral and dangerous doctrine, and that those who believed in it should be outlawed." This we could reasonably expect from the land of "Blue laws;" and the other from a country where they formerly murdered persons for their opinions; but we are thankful that none of them will be appointed to judge the world, nor receive power to shut heaven from any one. They may make bolts and bars here, and here is the only place where they can ever use them. God is to be thanked, that the religion which he has revealed for the salvation of men, is in no want of being bolstered up to keep it from falling, or from becoming untrue, by employing Massachusetts or Connecticut to enact laws to shut from society such men as Kneeland for fear they will investigate it!—[Editor of the Star.]

The Evening and the Morning Star.

KIRTLAND. OHIO, MARCH, 1834.

THE PROPHECY OF ZEPHANIAH.

(Continued from our last.)

Perhaps it might have been considered superfluous in Zephaniah, to predict the downfall of other nations, beside Israel, without carrying the same to them, or causing it to be done; but how far this was the case we shall not pretend to say, as we have no information on the subject contained in the sacred volume. It is a fact, that many of the prophets of Israel were very free in their predictions upon the heathen nations, and Israel might from time to time have seen the fulfilment of many of them had they looked, ere this day. Jonah, as appears from the account, visited Nineveh and proclaimed the word of God to its inhabitants; and, what is very remarkable, they repented and covered themselves with sackcloth from the king to the lowest servant; while Israel, favored with prophets from the beginning of their location in the land of Palestine, rushed on in wickedness till the wrath of heaven overtook them to the uttermost. But it ought to be remembered, that Jonah lived in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, more than one hundred and fifty years before the days of Zephaniah, and more than eighty previous to the time when the king of Assyria took the ten tribes from their own land to which they have not yet been restored.—And though the pride and boast of Assyria was humbled to the dust at the voice of God through one of the prophets from the land of Israel, yet now they could march fearlessly into the heart of that country and lead captive its inhabitants, because they had forsaken their Shepherd.

How far Nineveh had been enlightened by the revelations of the Lord previous to the time when Jonah visited it, we are not able to say, but we conclude, that they must have revered the word of God more than most people in our day, or else Jonah's appearance and preaching would not have excited such an alarm, and been the means of so great a reformation. Neither is it for us to say how long they continued righteous afterward; but we may conclude, that if a great people can turn from evil to good in a few days, in the space of eighty years, without continual preaching to, they could again fall into wickedness. But this, perhaps, may be thought digressing too far from the subject of Zephaniah's prophecy, though we are under the necessity of looking at the principal part of his predictions as we pass to the point which we had in view when we commenced; and we are of the opinion, that a minute investigation into even the least or shortest prophecy contained in the scriptures, would be of lasting benefit to any individual who might take the trouble and devote the time to that employment. The prophecies, are thought by many to be of no consequence whatever in our day to the human family, and that, if they are not all fulfilled, (as many suppose them to be,) they are clothed in mysteries and wrapped in metaphors far beyond our comprehension; and if ever fulfilled, the real meaning is so foreign from the literal word, that no one in our time can know any thing what the prophets did mean when they spake;

consequently, it is of no importance to us whether they are fulfilled, or whether they remain yet to be: and under circumstances of such a nature, it would matter nothing to us one way nor the other; for though the thing might have been plain to the prophet in his vision, it has since been looked up in the bosom of God, and is never to be shown again till it is accomplished, and then, no one can know it but himself, because he had hid it from the discernment of mortals.

It must be admitted, that even if the prophecies are dark and mysterious to us, they were, in a greater or less degree understood by those who spake them; and this we infer from the fact, that many of their predictions were fulfilled as they were literally spoken; and all the vast overturns among the surrounding nations seemed to have a bearing upon the history of Israel, and the prophets seldom closed their predictions without remarking something that should befall them. They knew that if Israel was scattered the heathen must also suffer in their turn; and if the children of Judah were chastened for their iniquities, their idolatrous neighbours, must, in due time be destroyed. Moab and Ammon, were looked upon by many of the prophets of Israel and were threatened with judgments. Zephaniah looked upon the time when they should reap their just reward for all the bitter affliction that they had brought upon Israel, and with sublime and positive language declares their overthrow. He says:

I have heard the reproach of Moab and the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border.—Therefore, as I live saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and salt-pits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them.—Who but those instructed by the Spirit of the Lord could suppose, or even would admit for a moment, the possibility that the children of Lot, after centuries of prosperity, in which they had conquered nations and enriched themselves with their spoils, could suddenly be diminished and brought into subjection to a people whose physical power was at the time of Zephaniah so far inferior to their own? and that too, after Israel had been diminished by the judgments which had overtaken them from the hand of the Lord? for the remnant of Judah were not to possess them, until they themselves had been led into captivity.

It may be thought by some, that these predictions were fulfilled when Judah returned from the Babylonish captivity; but we ask, did not these nations more or less of them exist at that time? and did not the Jews receive assistance from the Babylonians to re-instate themselves in the land of Judea, when they did return? and were not these nations constantly annoying the remnant of Jacob for a long period? and when these nations were under the yoke of other nations did Judah possess their land? It is said, the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them. So far from spoiling the heathen or possessing their land, we know, (if we may credit the ac-

count,) that they were struggling to maintain their own; and even down to the coming of the Messiah Judea was a Roman province. But any man acquainted with the history of the Jews at this age, and the nations which then surrounded Palestine, on a moment's reflection will admit, that these prophecies in part have, in the strictest sense been literally fulfilled: So far, at least as we have any account of their fulfilment, it must be acknowledged a literal one. Where now is Gaza, and where is Ashkelon? Forsaken and desolate! Where is Ashdod and where is Ekron? Driven out and rooted up! Where are the inhabitants of Moab, and where are the children of Ammon? They are like Sodom, consumed and overthrown, a desolation in the eyes of every beholder, and a warning to every nation, that it is unsafe to sport with the people of God! Where is Assyria, and where is Nineveh that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me! The Assyrians themselves have long since been destroyed or led captives and mingled with other nations, and Nineveh has sunk like a stone into the mighty deep! But the children of Judah, though often scourged by the chastening hand of the Lord for their iniquities, and often led into captivity by their enemies, and made to serve in cruel bondage, yet their descendants remain and their posterity is still extant without being swallowed up in other nations, while many who have afflicted them have melted away: their national glory has become extinct, and all but their name has sunk in oblivion.

In the last chapter of this prophecy there is an advance of thought on the subject of Israel's situation, beyond the time when they were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, or even when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, and the Jews scattered into all parts of the earth. It must be plain to every man who is acquainted with his bible, or even common history; that a large portion of this chapter has not yet been fulfilled, or else the prophet spake figuratively, and did not calculate to edify Israel by his words nor the rising generations with his writings. But certainly, a part of his prophecy has been literally fulfilled, and that portion of it too which spake of the fall of certain nations which were wealthy and populous, as well as the judgments which came upon Jerusalem.—And since he has left us no rule to interpret it contrary from its plain reading, we do not feel justified in attempting to write, or to construe a sentence of it differently, without we can be made acquainted with the word of the Lord to that effect: and until then, we feel a conscience void of offence when we believe that all that has not been fulfilled precisely as it was spoken, will be in due time. If not, we shall then have to acknowledge, that we have known but little respecting the sayings of the ancient prophets; and that part which we now suppose has been fulfilled, might as well never have been spoken or written; for we cannot now be benefited in the least by them: and previous to the time when we can be, we must have another revelation to teach us what the old one means. Paul said in his epistle to the Romans, in the xvth chap. and 4th. verse, that, whatsoever things were written afore-

time, were written for our learning, that we through faith and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Either Paul and his brethren understood the sayings of the prophets to mean what they said, or they must have had some rule of interpretation which we have not, or else certainly, neither comfort nor hope could have been derived from a perusal of them. If they understood them to mean as they read, why not those who believe them understand them in the same manner in this age? But perhaps some of our friends may say, that the ancient churches had some rule by which they could penetrate into the dark sayings of the ancients, and unfold them to their full satisfaction, and thereby obtain much comfort and great hope; but when they left this rule, so they took it from the earth, and it is now in the bosom of eternity, locked up safely and securely, beyond the power of man to obtain; and since the ancient apostles established the church of Christ, and wrote many epistles to their brethren upon the subject, we have no need of any thing more: and a rule to enable us to interpret the whole bible, and lay out every secret, and unfold every mystery, would not be of any use to us, even were God willing to favor us with such an one. Neither would we believe it were it given, because we do not believe that he ever intended to speak again to mankind while the earth remains. So then, had we every necessary accomplishment to understand all the sayings in the whole scriptures it would do us no good; we should not act upon it, because we should not believe it. And this, in short, is the sad difficulty with the world at this day: they do not believe that the prophets meant what they said, neither do they believe that we can find out what they did mean; and yet hundreds are figuring, interpreting and expounding, for their hundreds and their thousands every year to tell the people something about the scriptures, which they, and the expositors themselves acknowledge that no man can understand, because they are all metaphors and types, and the Author of them long since ceased to speak to men; and the whole must remain at last as it was in the beginning!

We, were not disposed to condemn any portion of our fellow-beings for not believing as we do, or because they do not hold the words of the Lord by the mouths of his ancient prophets, precisely in the light that we conceive them to mean; or we might say, because they do not believe them to mean any thing that we can be benefitted with, because we cannot understand them; and we ourselves thinking that he meant to communicate his word to man in an intelligent manner, suited to his capacity, in some degree, that he might be benefitted by the same. We know, that in a free government, in the midst of a free-thinking and enlightened people, every man has the privilege as he chooses, and of interpreting the words of the prophets as to him may appear the most proper and right: and is left, (so far as human law can interfere,) to act his own choice freely and dispassionately, and settle all questions as to the items of his faith and religion uncontrolled by human influence; and there the matter may rest between himself and his Maker. A glorious

blessing! A privilege which, in our opinions cannot be estimated too highly, nor too thankfully acknowledged before Him who holds the destinies of all nations in his own hands, and who aways his scepter over all people.

But we cannot see the propriety of the idea that admits certain parts of prophecies to have been literally fulfilled, and other parts of the same prophecies, spoken by the same individuals, to be understood differently, because the time has not transpired when they were designed in the mind of the Lord to be, when they were spoken. We presume that it will readily be admitted, that the prophecies previously quoted, so far at least as they related to the downfall and overthrow of those nations against whom the judgments of the Almighty were denounced, have, in the plainest manner been literally fulfilled.

The Jews were led into captivity by their enemies, and Jerusalem was destroyed, and the land of Judea laid waste according to the plain declaration of the Lord by the mouth of the prophet, when he said that he would stretch out his hand upon Judah, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and utterly consume all things from off the land.

Having sketched considerably upon the two first chapters of Zephaniah's prophecy, we shall now speak more particularly of a portion of the matter written in the last.— There is however, a sufficient contained in the two first to afford a field for contemplation for a length of time, at least, when the fact is admitted, that it is the word of God, and that the very design of the Lord in giving it to his creatures was, that they might understand it and be benefitted thereby. In the chapter before us there is a stretch, or advance of thought peculiar and interesting; and such too as seems to have occupied the minds of the ancient prophets of Israel in a greater or less degree, which is easily to be discovered over the surface of a large portion of their prophecies. For though they predicted the dispersion of Israel and the captivity of the Jews, yet they seldom left these subjects, or closed their prophecies without speaking of the time when they should be brought back triumphant, and return to the land that God gave by promise to Abraham and his seed for an everlasting possession: which the reader will find written in language the most positive, if he will but take the trouble to look into their sayings.

After reminding the remnant of Israel then in the land, of the might and power of the Lord in the destruction of his enemies, or the enemies of his people, and in their salvation and protection, if faithful to his commandment, he declares to them that their sins are many and grievous; accusing their princes, their judges, and even their prophets and priests, saying they were like roaring lions, evenin wolves, light, and vain and treacherous; that they had polluted the sanctuary, and done violence to the law; he declares again that he will lay waste the nations, cut off their towers, and lay open their streets to desolation, that there is no man, that there is no inhabitant. But notwithstanding all these, he exhorts them to wait upon him still, for he had determined a time when he would raise up to the pray, when the earth should be consumed with the fire

of his jealousy; when he would gather the nations, that he might assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger: for, said he, all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.

He said, I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate, I made their streets waste, that none passed by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant. Therefore, wait ye upon me saith the Lord. Certainly, there is a peculiar force to these remarkable words: Wait ye upon me! How long? Till the time when I shall rise up to the prey! When has God for Israel rose up to the prey? When has he gathered the nations and assembled the kingdoms? and when has he poured upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger. and when has all the earth been devoured with the fire of his jealousy? Was it when Israel came out of the land of Egypt? The Egyptians were then the only sufferers: The posterity of Ham then felt the wrath and vengeance of Israel's God; but not the whole earth. Pharaoh's hosts were then collected, and Thebes from her hundred gates sent forth her tents of thousands to trample down and take the spoil; but the outstretched arm of Jehovah in the defense of Jacob, caused them to be swallowed up in the Red Sea; and yet the nations were not then gathered, nor the kingdoms assembled, neither was the whole earth devoured with the fire of his jealousy. Was it when Israel marched into the land of Canaan with Joshua at their head, directed by the voice of the Lord? Jordan stood upon heaps at the approach of God's covenant people, and the walls of Jericho fell to the earth when they shouted in his name; the surrounding nations, the posterity of Canaan felt the shock; but the nations were not then gathered, nor the kingdoms assembled, neither all the earth devoured with the fire of his jealousy: the time had not arrived, nor had the prediction yet been made by the prophets of Israel. But centuries must roll away, and Jacob be driven from his land before that period was to come when he would, for his sake, devour the earth with the fire of his jealousy. Wait ye upon me! How many tedious hours has Israel, upon this word so big with meaning, sat in captivity, reviled and rejected, a hiss, a taunt, and a by-word, and waited with longing and with sighs too large to be expressed, for the precious voice to sound from the throne of I AM, and proclaim, Rise up! Rise up! Return ye! Return ye! O my people of the house of Israel; for this is the time that I will rise up to the prey! Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord. How oft has Israel wept in captivity while waiting for that long looked for hour: and how oft the arm of violence been raised because he still persisted that God would yet call himself, and declare that the time had arrived when he would rise up to the prey! How fruitless has been the labors of Gentile Missionaries in attempting to convert the seed of Jacob from the errors of their ways, by pretending that God had sent them, and at the same time declaring that God had ceased to talk to men. Nor could it surprise a man of common sense, that the Israelites should turn from them with disdain, after hearing that God had called for Jacob to return to him again, and had not

spoken from the heavens directly to that effect. Israel will never be duped with such a plan of inconsistency! The prophets in ancient days heard the voice of the Lord, and declared that in the last days their seed should hear it again. And though the Jews stumbled and were scattered, yet they look with longing anxiety, and wait to hear the acceptable sound that, the time has come when I will build you as at the first, and lead you as at the beginning; and make bare my holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, that all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of God! And we have no scruple in saying, that Israel will never embrace the gospel, nor the Jews believe in the Messiah as a people, till the Lord sends his word to them; for their fathers once enjoyed this blessing, and left it upon record that their children should inherit the same; and though they are scattered to the four winds, and peeled with affliction and adversity, they will yet wait till God himself shall speak; till he himself shall rise up to the prey! Convince Israel of this, and the work will soon be done. Convince him that the Lord himself has called, and no power of man can prevent his gathering. Let him once again be taught by the voice of the living God from on high, and the work of reformation will immediately be accomplished. But till then, the attempts of the Gentiles will be fruitless, it is what the Jews cannot, nor will not believe. If they should they would lay aside the voice of their fathers contained in the prophets, that they should in the last days, hear again: but this they have not, nor never will. That reflection which rolls across the mind, that their Shepherd once taught their fathers, is cherished too dearly to be exchanged for a phantom, a dream, a bubble, a vain and foolish whim, got up in the brains of the Gentiles, that God would never speak again to mankind! It will never be accepted with Israel; it will never be believed by the seed of Jacob: for that at once destroys the testimony of their fathers, that God would, in the last days, gather their children to the land of Canaan to possess it forever. Men who never heard the voice of God themselves, neither their fathers, but are dependent upon the voice of inspiration to another people who are no nearer related than the Jews and the Gentiles, may preach, perhaps, with some success among those who are in the same situation: for they will wait according to the declaration of their fathers, till the Lord shall rise up to the prey! Then, and not till then, will Israel be converted!

Zephaniah proceeds, after speaking of the great commotion which is to take place at the time, or before Israel returns to his own land, and says, For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed shall bring mine offering.—We understand that the pure language is to be turned to the people after the nations are gathered, and the kingdoms assembled, and the indignation poured upon them, when all the earth is consumed with the fire of the Lord's jealousy, and not till then; because this marvelous display of the power of God is to be exerted that they may all call upon him to serve him with one consent; and who can-

not see, that they cannot *all* serve him with one consent while a part are righteous and a part wicked! *And then!* Signifies afterward: After the wicked are cut off the righteous shall speak a pure language. It is said, long after the great Deluge, that the earth was of one language, and the Lord confounded that, and sent, or scattered the people into all the earth. If we can believe the first, why not the last? If we believe that all the earth once spake the same language, and that was confounded by the power of God, why not believe that God has power to cause the earth to speak one language again? Suppose that a Greek, a Roman, a Frenchman, a Spaniard, a Frenchman, an Englishman, and an Arab, were to be saved by listening to the gospel of Christ; when they arrived in heaven could they understand each other? or would the Lord have a school where they would all be taught to speak one language? and if so, what language would it be? Our readers, no doubt would smile at our folly, were they to think that we had any such belief. If then, God has power to cause all nations and languages to speak the same language, when in heaven, what is the reason that he has not power to cause the same on earth? Has he not all power? O yes, our friends will say: but you know, that he has long since ceased to work miracles on earth. Can that be the fact? If it is, we have to confess our ignorance; for we have not yet found in our bible where the Lord said he would ever cease to work on earth, or in heaven. Perhaps it may be in some corner of our neighbor's, and so closely written that we have not found it; not being favored with very discerning eyes.—From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia! It will be admitted, we presume, that Zephaniah was in the land of Judea while delivering this notable prediction; and where, we ask, could the Lord's suppliants be found beyond the rivers of Ethiopia? Had he a people upon the continent of Africa? Was Israel driven there when Shalmanasser king of Assyria took them from the land of Palestine? Did they not, after taking counsel to leave the land of the heathen, go to the north? And is it not said that they passed over the narrow passage of the Euphrates, [not Ethiopia,] while the Lord held the flood? And is it not said again, that he will smite it in the seven streams in the last days and cause men to go over dry shod? Where, then, are his suppliants who were to bring his offering from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia? Was this fulfilled when the Jews returned from Babylon? This could not be, because Babylon was not beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, neither was a pure language turned to the people, that they might all call upon the Lord to serve him with one consent.

In that day, [when the pure language is restored, and the suppliants have brought the offering from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,] thou shalt not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me; for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty, because of my holy mountain. For such as are conversant with the prophets, we conclude, that a lengthy comment upon this verse will be of but little edification: for all ought to know, that there never has been a time since Israel came out of Egypt when the Lord took from

their midst *all* that rejoiced in pride. And thou shalt no more be haughty, because of my holy mountain! If Jerusalem has been a holy place since the time when Zephaniah delivered this prophecy, we would like to be informed when: for when this is fulfilled his people are to be no more haughty, because of his holy mountain. If Jerusalem was then holy, the Jews never found out that fact, if they did they asked but little about it, or they would have been better prepared to receive the Messiah when he came. As a proof that the last sentence has not been fulfilled, we quote a short quotation from the prophecy of Isaiah, which will show very plainly that Jerusalem is yet to be inhabited by the Jews, and is also to be a holy place.—The Arabs may now call Jerusalem a holy place; the Catholics may also, as well as the city of Rome, because Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom in it and the Pope, their holy father, the successor of St. Peter, and the vicar of Jesus Christ, as they call him, now resides in the same; [Rome] but in our opinion, Jerusalem is far lacking in holiness and has ever been since the days of Zephaniah, Isaiah xxvii 12 & 13. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem. When has the great trumpet been blown in Assyria? and when has the channel of the river been beaten off that Israel might come one by one? and when have they worshipped in his holy mount at Jerusalem?

Every sentence of the last of Zephaniah's prophecy seems to be spoken in that plain and intelligent manner, that every individual who admits the fact, that Israel will return to the land of his fathers in the last days, must be ready to conclude, that if there is any confidence to be placed in the words of prophecy, and if we can believe that they were ever designed to be understood, the prophet must have had his eye fixed upon the time when the Lord was about to rise up to the prey: when he was about to exalt that long afflicted people above the power of all their oppressors, and establish them in righteousness by his own hand. He again says: The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. When, since the days of this prophet, has Israel dwelt in the land of Canaan in righteousness, and been guilty of no iniquity, nor spoken lies? When has been a time when a deceitful tongue was not to be found in their mouths? Was it after the Babylonish captivity? Who does not know, that they were filled with violence and iniquity, that deceit and wickedness filled Jerusalem from one end to the other, and they falsely accused even their Messiah & shed his blood? Was this the righteous people of whom the prophet was here writing, that they should be so completely delivered from all their enemies that they should feed and lie down in peace, there being none to make them afraid?

Were they not in constant and almost unceasing wars? Famine and the sword were on every side from their return from Babylon, to the days when Titus took the city and razed it to the foundation.

(To be continued.)

THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH IN KIRTLAND, TO THEIR BRETHREN ABROAD.

(Continued from our last.)

Dear brethren in Christ, and companions in tribulation:

We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the more conspicuous are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, until he has overcome the evils of this life and lost every desire of sin; and like the ancients, arrives to that point of faith that he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment: he must have been instructed into the government and laws of that kingdom by proper degrees, till his mind was capable in some measure of comprehending the propriety, justice, equity, and consistency of the same. For further instruction we refer you to Deut. xxxii. where the Lord says, that Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye, &c. which will show the force of the last item advanced, that it is necessary for men to receive an understanding concerning the laws of the heavenly kingdom, before they are permitted to enter it: we mean the celestial glory. So dissimilar are the governments of men, and so divers are their laws, from the government and laws of heaven, that a man, for instance, hearing that there was a country on this globe called the United States of North America, could take his journey to this place without first learning the laws of government; but the conditions of God's kingdom are such, that all who are made partakers of that glory, are under the necessity of first learning something respecting it previous to their entering into it. But the foreigner can come to this country without knowing a syllable of its laws, or even subscribing to obey them after he arrives. Why? Because the government of the U. States does not require it: it only requires an obedience to its laws after the individual has arrived within its jurisdiction.

As we previously remarked, we do not attempt to place the law of men on a parallel with the law of heaven; but we will bring forward another item, to further urge the propriety of yielding obedience to the law of heaven, after the fact is admitted, that the laws of men are binding upon man. Were a king to extend his dominion over the habitable earth, and send forth his laws which were of the most perfect kind, and command his subjects one and all to yield obedience to the same; and annex as a reward to those who obeyed them, that at a certain period they should be called to attend the marriage of his son, who in due time was to receive the kingdom, and they should be made equal with him in the same; & annex as a penalty for disobedience that every individual should be cast out at the marriage feast, and have no part nor portion with his government; and what rational mind could for a moment accuse the king with injustice for punishing such rebellious subjects? In the first place, his laws were just, easy and perfect: nothing was required in them of a tyrannical nature; but their very construction was equity and beauty; and when obeyed would produce the happiest situation possible to all who adhered to them, beside the last great benefit of sitting down with a royal robe in the presence of the king at the great grand marriage supper of his son, and be made equal with him in all the affairs of the kingdom.

When these royal laws were issued, and promulgated throughout the vast dominion, every subject, when interrogated whether he believed them to be from his sovereign, answered, Yes, I know they are, I am acquainted with the signature, for it is as usual. **THUS SAITH THE KING:** This admitted, the subject is bound by every consideration of honor to his country, his king, and his own personal character, to observe in the strictest sense every requisition in the royal edict. Should any escape the search of the ambassadors of the king, and never hear these last laws, giving

his subjects such exalted privileges, an excuse might be urged in their behalf, and they escape the censure of the king. But for those who had heard, who had admitted, and who had promised obedience to these just laws no excuse could be urged, and when brought into the presence of the king, certainly, justice would require that they should suffer a penalty! Could that king be just in admitting these rebellious individuals into the full enjoyment and privileges with his son, and those who had been obedient to his commandments? Certainly not. Because they disregarded the voice of their lawful king; they had no regard for his virtuous laws, for his dignity, nor for the honor of his name; neither for their own country's sake, nor their private virtue! They neither regarded his authority enough to obey him, neither did they regard the immediate advantages and blessings arising from these laws if kept, to observe them, so destitute were they of virtue and goodness; and above all, they regarded so little the joy and satisfaction of a legal seat in the presence of the king's only son, and to be made equal with him in all the blessings, honors, comforts, and felicities of his kingdom, that they turned away from an anticipation of them, and considered that they were beneath their present notice, though they had no doubt as to the real authenticity of the royal edict.

We ask, again, would the king be just in admitting these rebels to all the privileges of his kingdom, with those who had served him with the strictest integrity? We again answer, No! such individuals would be dangerous characters in any government, good and wholesome laws they despised; just and perfect principles they trampled under their feet as something beneath their notice, and disregarded those commands of their sovereign entirely which they had once acknowledged to be equitable! How could a government be conducted with harmony if its administrators were possessed with such different dispositions and different principles? Could it prosper? Could it flourish? Would harmony prevail? Would order be established, and could justice be executed in righteousness in all branches of its department? No! In it were two classes of men as dissimilar as light is from darkness, virtue from vice, justice from injustice, truth from falsehood, and holiness from sin! One class were perfectly harmless and virtuous: they knew what virtue was for they had lived in the fullest enjoyment of it, and their fidelity to truth fairly tested by a series of years of faithful obedience to all its heavenly precepts. They knew what good order was, for they had been orderly and obedient to the laws imposed on them by their wise sovereign, and had experienced the benefits arising from a life spent in his government till he had now seen proper to make them equal with his son. Such individuals would indeed adorn any court where perfection was one of its main springs of action, and shine far more fair than the richest gem in the diadem of the prince.

The other class were a set of individuals who disregarded every principle of justice & equity, whatever, and this is demonstrated from the fact, that when just laws were issued by the king, which were perfectly equitable, they were so lost to a sense of righteousness that they disregarded those laws, not-